

MARTIN LUTHER

BUNSEN

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*BIOGRAPHICAL SERIES*









LIFE OF MARTIN LUTHER,

BY

CHEVALIER BUNSEN;

WITH AN ESTIMATE OF

LUTHER'S CHARACTER AND GENIUS,

By THOMAS CARLYLE;

AND AN

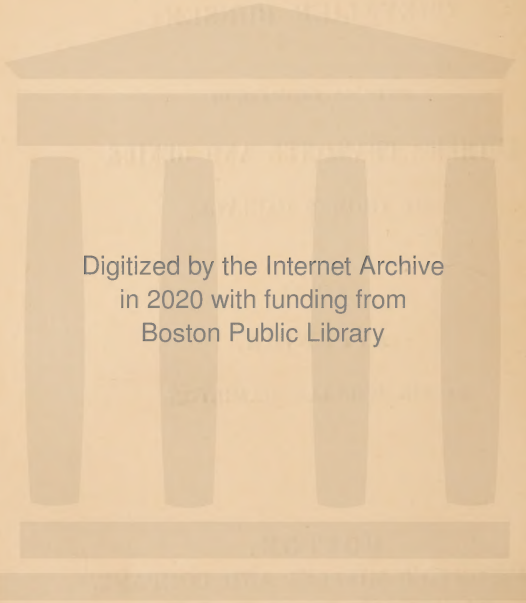
APPENDIX,

By SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON.

BOSTON:

HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY.

The Riverside Press, Cambridge.



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## PREFACE

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THE briefest, most reliable, and, taken all in all, the completest extant life of Luther, is this contributed by the Chevalier Bunsen to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Author and subject need no praise from us. We are happy to place within the reach of all a good and trustworthy summary of the great Reformer's life.

From Carlyle is added an estimate of Luther's Character and Genius—one of those spiritual portraits for which Carlyle will be known as long as literature endures, and on which his fame will ultimately rest.

Following our general plan, we here give a biographical sketch of the author from whom the Life of Luther has been taken.

BUNSEN, CHRISTIAN KARL JOSIAS, CHEVALIER DE, a philologist, theologian and diplomatist, was born at Corbach, in the small German principality of Waldeck, on the 25th of August, 1791; and was educated at the University of Göttingen, where he studied philology under the famous Heyne. He distinguished himself greatly as a classical scholar, and in 1813 published at Göttingen a prose essay, "*De Jure Atheniensium Hereditario.*" After being employed some time as a classical teacher, his desire to perfect himself in Oriental languages induced him to go to Paris, where he studied under the noted Orientalist Sylvestre de Sacy. He had it next in contemplation to go to India, in company with an Englishman, in order to acquire a further knowledge of Sanscrit; but having in the mean time determined to visit Italy, he met at Rome his friend Brandis, then Secretary to the Prussian embassy at Rome under Niebuhr. Introduced to Niebuhr, the young scholar

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found in him a friend capable of appreciating his merits. Abandoning his intention of going to the East, he settled in Rome as Niebuhr's private secretary—a situation afterwards exchanged for the higher one of secretary to the embassy. Enjoying the benefit of Niebuhr's society and advice, he resumed his classical studies with enthusiasm, turning to advantage the facilities afforded him by his residence in Rome. The results of his inquiries into the antiquities and topography of Rome appeared in his "*Beschreibung der Stadt Rom*," (Description of the City of Rome.) He also interested himself much at this time in the hieroglyphical researches of Champollion; and he was instrumental in inciting the savans of Berlin to betake themselves to this branch of archæology, and more particularly in determining towards it the rising talent of the great living Ægyptologist, Dr. Lepsius. At Rome Bunsen was one of the chief supports of the Archæological Institute, and indeed



acted as its general secretary. The visit of the King of Prussia to Rome in 1822, made that sovereign acquainted with the abilities of the secretary of his legation; the present king also—then crown prince—made his acquaintance about the same time. The personal esteem which both contracted for Bunsen accounts for his rapid advancement in the Prussian diplomatic service. On Niebuhr's retirement from the embassy at Rome, Bunsen succeeded him, first as Chargé d'affaires and afterwards as full minister. In this capacity he interested himself much in the Protestant Church and Protestant worship at Rome, as well as in his classical and historical studies. A difference between the papal court and that of Prussia on a question of ecclesiastical right in the Prussian States, led to his recall in March 1838. After a visit to Munich and to England, he was again in November 1839, in diplomatic service as ambassador to the Swiss Confederacy; and in 1841 he was appoint-

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ed Prussian ambassador to England. Retaining this post till 1854, when his peculiar opinions on the proper policy of Prussia in the approaching European crisis led to his resignation or recall, and having during these thirteen years resided chiefly in London, Chevalier Bunsen became almost a naturalized Englishman; and indeed two of his sons have settled in England, one as a clergyman in the English Church. While discharging with peculiar discretion his duties as Prussian ambassador, he was at the same time widely known in English society as a philologist and a man of letters—a representative, in intellectual English circles, of the erudition and scholarly zeal of Germany. The following list of his works, published since 1841, will indicate the grounds of his well-earned celebrity:—"The Liturgy of the Passion-week, with a Preface," &c., published at Hamburg in 1841, not translated; "The Basilicæ of Christian Rome in their Connection with the Idea and History of

Church Architecture," &c., published at Munich in 1843, and not translated; "The Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch, with Annotations," and "Ignatius of Antioch and his Age, Seven Letters to Dr. A. Neander," both published by the Academy of Hamburg in 1844, and the last we believe translated; "Die Verfassung der Kirche der Zukunft," published at Hamburg in 1845, and translated into English in 1847, under the title of "The Constitution of the Church of the Future;" *Ægyptens Stelle in der Weltgeschichte*, Hamburg, 1845, and the English translation of which, "Egypt's Place in Universal History," is perhaps the best known of the author's works; "Memoir on the Constitutional Rights of the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein," presented to Lord Palmerston, April 1848, and published that year (about which time other papers on German politics were published by the author;) finally, since 1848, contributions to "The Life and Letters of B. G. Niebuhr," published by an

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English editor in 1852, from the German materials; and an important and elaborate work published first in 1851, in four volumes, under the title of "Hippolytus," and again in a revised and extended form in 1854, as "Christianity and Mankind: their Beginnings and Prospects," in seven volumes—volumes one and two containing "Hippolytus and his Age," volumes three and four "Outlines of the Philosophy of Universal History applied to Language and Religion," and volumes five, six, and seven, "Analecta Ante-Nicæna." It is as an *Ægyptologist* and ecclesiastical historian that Chevalier Bunsen has most widely affected his time. He now lives in retirement on the Rhine, pursuing his favorite studies, and often reading or writing at a standing-desk sixteen hours a day.

An Appendix, entitled by us the Reverse-side of the Picture, which we confess did not enter into our original plan. will show, in the emphatic language of Sir Wm. Hamilton, the blemishes of Luther's

character. Why should the faults of a great man be concealed? To err is human, and no one claims for Luther exemption from the common lot of mankind. Sir Wm. Hamilton has stated the faults of Luther with such vigor of style and wealth of erudition, as really to exaggerate their importance. Archdeacon Hare undertook a defence, but found himself powerless in the grip of Hercules, and really damaged the cause of which he made himself the champion. We have omitted all passages in Hamilton's notes that are merely personal, retaining such facts as demand a place in history. We must accept Luther, as we accept ourselves, as we accept many things, for better or for worse, and be devoutly thankful to Heaven for whatever good is vouchsafed us. The sun has its spots, and the great Reformer has in his character a touch of earth that links him more closely with our poor humanity.

O. W. WIGHT.

April, 1859.



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MARTIN LUTHER.

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## MARTIN LUTHER

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LUTHER's life is both the epos and the tragedy of his age. It is an epos because its first part presents a hero and a prophet, who conquers apparently insuperable difficulties, and opens a new world to the human mind, without any power but that of divine truth and deep conviction, or any authority but that inherent in sincerity and undaunted, unselfish courage. But Luther's life is also a tragedy: it is the tragedy of Germany as well as of the hero, her son, who in vain tried to rescue his country from unholy oppression, and to regenerate her from within, as a nation, by means of the Gospel; and who died in

unshaken faith in Christ and in his kingdom, although he lived to see his beloved fatherland going to destruction, not through, but in spite of, the Reformation.

Both parts of Luther's life are of the highest interest. In the epic part of it we see the most arduous work of the time,—the work for two hundred years tried in vain by councils, and by prophets and martyrs, with and without emperors, kings, and princes,—undertaken by a poor monk alone, who carried it out under the ban both of the pope and the empire. In the second, we see him surrounded by friends and disciples, always the spiritual head of his nation, and the revered adviser of princes and preacher of the people; living in the same poverty as before, and leaving his descendants as unprovided for as Aristides left his daughter. So lived and died the greatest hero of

Christendom since the apostles ; the restorer of that form of Christianity which now sustains Europe, and (with all its defects) regenerating and purifying the whole human race ; the founder of the modern German language and literature ; the first speaker and debater of his country ; and, at the same time, the first writer in prose and verse of his age.

And in what state had he found his native country ? The once free and powerful aggregate of nations, which had overthrown the western empire, conquered Gaul, and transfused healthier blood into the Romanized Celtic population of Britain, had gradually been broken up into nearly four hundred (with the barons of the empire twelve hundred) sovereignties, under a powerless imperial government represented by emperors bent upon the destruction of nationality, and by an oligarchic



diet with seven electoral princes at its head, three of whom, as ecclesiastics, were creatures of the pope, while the remaining four, imitating the emperor, were occupied rather with the selfish interests of their princely houses than with those of their country. When, in 1486, Maximilian was to be elected king of the Romans, and when he became emperor (in 1493,) Archbishop Berthold, elector of Mayence, a great and patriotic man, had prepared, with some other German princes, a plan for a sort of national executive, the members of which were not to be installed, as heretofore, by the emperor alone, but appointed by the Diet and the electors, in order to form a federal senate to co-operate with the emperor. But the Austrian prince, son-in-law of Charles of Burgundy, and heir to his kingly estates, was liberal in promises unfulfilled, having lived not only to maintain

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but to strengthen the imperial autocracy. His great comfort on his death-bed was the reflection that his whole life had been devoted to the aggrandizement of his own House of Austria. The smaller German lords and knights of the empire made a last attempt to maintain their independence, and to restore the ancient liberties of the German nation; but acting in a lawless manner and without any political wisdom, they were crushed by the united power of the emperor and the electors. The more eminent and powerful portion of the mass of the nation was represented by the wealthy towns, which had purchased from the emperors the privileges of free imperial cities; and which, with the Hanseatic towns, would have formed, united with the estate of the knights, the most complete constituent parts of a House of Commons, by the side of the princes, dukes, and

counts of the empire as House of Peers. The formation of such an effective federal empire must have been in the mind of those enlightened men, who, at the election of Maximilian, perceived that a constitution was necessary to prevent Germany from becoming a mere domain of the emperors. A truly representative government, federal and unitary, monarchical, and aristocratical, and popular, would have followed, as a matter of course, from such a beginning as that proposed. But since the failure of that plan nothing effectual had been accomplished; isolation and separation became more complete; the peace of the land was enforced at last, although imperfectly; and the imperial tribunal established by Maximilian acted with insufficient authority, and, as was believed, not with equal justice. The greatest iniquity was the condition of the peasantry. The freeholders had

in many parts of Germany been, if not absorbed, at least considerably diminished by the feudal system; but the great grievances were the illegal abuses which had grown out of that system and the always increasing exactions of the lords of the manor, who, particularly in Southern Germany, had reduced the peasants to real serfs,—men who had to render unlimited services and scarcely could support life. There had been insurrections of peasants, particularly along the Upper Rhine, in 1491 and again in 1503; but being without leaders, they were each time crushed after a bloody struggle, and the ultimate result was a still greater amount of hardship. The chains of the sufferers were riveted. In short, Germany was suffering from all the same evils as France and England without having gained that unity and strength of government which in those countries

had resulted from similar struggles. On the other hand, however, the age was one of general progress. The invention of printing had given wings to the human mind ; philology had opened the sources of historical knowledge as well as of philosophy and poetry ; astrology began to give way to astronomy, and the idea of the universe emerged out of Jewish and other fables. As to Germany in particular, the cradle of the art of printing, Augsburg and other great cities were, with the Hanseatic towns, centres of European commerce, and partook of the resources opened by the discovery of America. The religious mind, too, had been awakened since the days of Wycliffe and of Huss. Believing Christendom, and, above all, believing Germany, had hoped for a real reform of the Church, the abuses of which were doubly felt in consequence of the shameful immorality of the popes, and



the ever-increasing exactions of the court of Rome. The issue of immense efforts on the part of emperors, princes, and people, was, that the Council of Constance delivered Huss to the flames, and both the councils of Constance and Basle ended in a more decided supremacy of the Roman pontiffs. Certainly the religious mind of Germany was not a little damped by these disappointments; but the thirst after a reform was not quenched by the evident unwillingness of Rome to reform itself. The wise and good men of the time, however, could not discover any means to achieve what was generally desired and demanded. The faith in human, and gradually also in divine justice upon earth, had long disappeared in unfortunate Italy, as the writings of the age prove; but now it threatened to vanish even in the minds of the Germans, in whom that faith may be called eminently their in-

nate individual and national religion. The Bible had been repeatedly printed in the vernacular tongue, but it was, and continued to be, a book closed with seven seals. There was a general feeling that the gospel ought to be made the foundation of purified religion and doctrine; but where was the man to resuscitate its letter and spirit, and to find the way from Christ to the soul through the darkness and the fictions, the usages and the abuses, of the intervening centuries? The voice of the Friends of God with Tauler at their head had been choked in blood, like that of the Waldenses; and then, supposing such an evangelical basis to have been found, was the existing state of injustice and wrong to continue? Were the emperors to continue to sacrifice the empire to their dynastic interests—the princes and the nobles to their covetousness and licentiousness? Yes; would not

the overthrow of the ecclesiastical power lead to universal conflagration, and rebellion, and destruction, and thus Christendom be thrown back into a worse barbarism than that out of which they were anxious to emerge? In short, the work (so it seemed) could not be undertaken but in despair or in enthusiastic faith. In the former case it must succumb necessarily; but even if begun with the faith of Wycliffe and of Huss, would not the attempt in any case lead to a long-continued struggle, the end of which none of those who began it could live to witness? Who should enter on so tremendous a course?

Such was the work to be done, and such were the general and peculiar difficulties and the state of things in Germany, when Luther undertook it. Luther devoted a life of almost supernatural energy and suffering to secure its basis; and although at his death he left

it surrounded by the greatest dangers, and one hundred years of bloody struggle were succeeded by another hundred years of agony and of exhaustion, still the Reformation survived, and proved essentially the renovating element of mankind instead of being (as its enemies prophesied) the promoter of revolution. It subsists to this hour as the only durable preserver of all liberties, religious or political; and the nations and states which have embraced the Reformation are those only which have escaped the revolutions which for seventy years have agitated those of the Roman faith.

The life of him who was the beginner of this great and holy work, and who broke down the double tyranny of pope and emperor arrayed against him, must therefore be considered from a higher point of view than that of individual biography, or sectarian panegyric, or national vanity and prejudices. The

article upon Luther will have to be treated from the central point of the universal history of mankind. This must be also the rule for fixing the epochs of Luther's life. One of the reasons why this life is not yet fully appreciated is, that it is not sufficiently understood; and this again arises in great measure from the want of due observation of the critical points in the development of the Reformation and of the history of Europe, and of Germany in particular.

We shall divide the following condensed but complete survey into three periods. The first will be the period of preparation, extending to Luther's first publication of theses against the indulgences, 31st October, 1517; the second will comprise the next eight years of preaching the gospel and gospel-doctrine in its three fundamental parts; the third is that of political and theological struggles, from 1525 to his death

in 1546;—preparation, progressive action, and then struggle within and without. Luther's grand character and true piety shine in both periods of his public career; but the culminating point of his active and creative agency is in the first. It is, according to our view the year 1523 which forms the critical epoch. In 1524 the foundation of the practical realization of the principles of the Reformation was laid with triumphant success. The year 1525 began hopefully, but ended with the preparation for a struggle, of which Luther felt at once that he never should see the end. Before the close of 1525, he gave up the cause of Germany, not in consequence of any fault committed by himself, but because he saw that his party was not prepared for the struggle with the empire, and was still less resigned to leave the matter to God, who as Luther firmly believed to his death.

would never allow his work to perish till the end of the world. But was not the end of the world coming now?

FIRST PERIOD:—*The Years of Preparation; or, the first Thirty-four Years of Luther's Life*—(1483—1517.)

Martin Luther was born at Eisleben, in the county of Mansfeld, in Thuringia, on the 10th November, 1483, on the eve of St. Martin's day, in the same year as Raphael, nine years after Michael Angelo, and ten after Copernicus. His father was a miner, descended from a family of poor but free peasants, and possessed forges in Mansfeld, the small profits of which enabled him to send his son to the Latin school of the place. There Martin distinguished himself so much, that his father (by that time become a member of the municipal council) intended him for the study of the law. In the mean time, Martin had

often to go about as one of the poor choristers, singing and begging at the doors of charitable people at Magdeburg and at Eisenach, to the colleges of which towns he was successively sent. His remarkable appearance and serious demeanor, his fine tenor voice and musical talent, procured him the attention and afterwards the support and maternal care of a pious matron, wife of Cotta, burgomaster of Eisenach, into whose house he was taken. Already, in his eighteenth year, he surpassed all his fellow-students in knowledge of the Latin Classics, and in power of composition and of eloquence. His mind took more and more a deeply religious turn; but it was not till he had been for two years studying at Eisenach that he discovered an entire Bible, having until then only known the ecclesiastical extracts from the sacred volume, and the history of Hannah and



Samuel. He now determined to study Greek and Hebrew, the two original languages of the Bible. A dangerous illness brought him within the near prospect of death; but he recovered, and prosecuted his study of philosophy and law, and tried hard to gain inward peace by a pious life and the greatest strictness in all external observances. His natural cheerfulness disappeared; and after experiencing the shock of the death of one of his friends by assassination in the summer of 1505, and soon after that, being startled by a thunder-bolt striking the earth by his side, he determined to give up the world and retire into the convent of the Augustinians at Erfurt — much against the wishes and advice of his father, who, indeed, most strongly remonstrated. Luther soon experienced the uselessness of monastic life and discipline, and suffered from the coarseness of his brethren,

who felt his **exercises** of study and meditation to be a reproach upon their own habits of gossiping and mendicancy. It was at this period that he began to study the Old Testament in Hebrew, yet continuing to fulfill scrupulously the rules of his order. "I tormented myself to death," he said at a later period, "to make my peace with God, but I was in darkness and found it not." The vicar-general of the order, Johann Von Staupitz, who had passed through the same discipline with the same result, comforted him by those remarkable words, which remained forever engraven in Luther's heart:—"There is no true repentance but that which begins with the love of righteousness and of God. Love him then who has loved thee first!" In the struggles which followed Luther's real beginning of a new life, and in the perplexities into which Augustine's doctrine of election threw him

the book which, after the Bible, exercised the greatest and most beneficial influence upon his mind, was that practical concentration of the sermons and other works of Tauler—the enlightened Dominican preacher and Christian philosopher of the middle of the fourteenth century — the *Theologia Germanica*, written by an anonymous author towards the latter part of that century, of which we shall have to speak hereafter.

When Luther regained his mental health, he took courage to be ordained priest in May 1507. Next year the Elector of Saxony nominated him professor of philosophy at the university of Wittenberg; and in 1509 he began to give, as bachelor in divinity, biblical lectures. These lectures were the awakening cause of new life in the university, and soon a great number of students, from all parts of Germany, gathered round Luther. Even professors

came to attend his lectures and hear his preaching. The year 1511 brought an apparent interruption, but in fact only a new development of Luther's character and knowledge of the world. He was sent by his order to Rome on account of some discrepancies of opinion as to its government. His first impression of the city was that of profound admiration, soon mixed with a melancholy recollection of Scipio's Homeric exclamation on the ruins of Carthage. The tone of flippant impiety at the court and among the higher clergy of Rome, under Julius XI., shocked the devout German monk. He then discovered the real state of the world in the centre of the Western Church; and often in after life he used to say—"I would not take 100,000 florins not to have seen Rome." Always anxious to learn, he took during his stay Hebrew lessons from a celebrated rabbi, Elias Levita

but the grand effect upon him was, that now for the first time he understood Christ and St. Paul—"The just shall live by faith"—that mighty saying with which he had begun at Wittenberg his interpretation of the Bible, now sounded on his ears in the midst of Rome. He saw that external works are nothing; that the pious spirit in which any work is done or any duty fulfilled—an humble handicraft or the preaching of sermons—is the only thing of value in the eye of God. On his return to the university, the favor of Staupitz and the generosity of the elector procured him a present of fifty florins (ducats) to defray the expenses of his promotion to the degree of Doctor of Divinity at the end of 1512. The solemn oath he had to pronounce on that occasion (to most only a formulary without deep meaning) "to devote his whole life to study, and faithfullv to

expound and defend the Holy Scripture," was to him the seal of his mission. He began his biblical teaching by attacking scholasticism, which at that time was called Aristotelianism. He showed that the Bible was a deeper philosophy: that, teaching the nothingness and wickedness of man as long as he is a selfish creature, it refutes and condemns all philosophical tenets which consider man separately from his relation to Deity. All his contemporaries praised as unparalleled the clearness of his Christian doctrine, the impressive eloquence of his preaching, and the mildness and sanctity of his character. Erasmus himself exclaimed—"There is not an honest divine who does not side with Luther." Christ's self-devoted life and death—Christ crucified, was the centre of his doctrine; God's eternal love to mankind, and the sure triumph of Faith, were his texts. Already, in

1516, philosophical tenets deduced from these spiritual principles were publicly defended at academical disputations over which he presided. Luther himself preached at Dresden and other places the doctrine of justifying and vivifying faith; and then accepted, for a short time, the place of vicar-general of his order in that year. Even in the convents, spiritual, moral Christianity made its way in spite of forms and observances. When the plague came to Wittemberg, he remained when all others fled,—“It is my post, and I have to finish my commentary upon the Epistle to the Galatians. Should brother Martin fail, yet the world will not fail.”

Thus came the year of the Reformation, 1517. With more boldness than ever, the new pope Leo had sent, in 1516, agents through the world to sell indulgences, and the man chosen for

Saxony, Tetzel the Dominican, and his band, were among the most zealous preachers of this iniquity. "I would not exchange," said he in one of his harangues, "my privilege (as vender of the papal letters of absolution) against those which St. Peter has in heaven; for I have saved more souls by my indulgences than the apostle by his sermons. Whatever crime one may have committed"—naming an outrage upon the person of the Virgin Mary—"let him pay well and he will receive pardon. Likewise the sins which you may be disposed to commit in future, may be atoned for beforehand." But he soon found that a spirit had been awakened among the serious minds of Germany to which such blasphemies were revolting. Luther preached and spoke out against this horrible abuse, which he said he could not believe to be sanctioned by the pope. As a great exhi



bition of relics, together with indulgences, was to take place on the day of All Saints in the church of Wittemberg, Luther appeared on the eve, 31st October, in the midst of the pilgrims who had flocked to the festival, and pasted up at the church door the ninety-five theses against indulgences and the superstitions connected with them, in firm although guarded language. The Reformation began, like that of St. John the Baptist, by the preaching of inward penitence, in opposition to penance and to absolution purchasable by gold; but Luther's preaching had the advantage that it was based upon man's redemption by Christ. Penitence was preached, as originating in the consciousness of man's unworthiness, God's mercy, and the redemption through Christ as placed before us in the gospel. The entire doctrine of these immortal Theses is summed up in the two last

(94, 95,) which run thus:—"The Christians are to be exhorted to make every effort to follow Christ their head through the cross, through death and hell; for it is much better they should through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of heaven, than acquire a carnal security by the consolations of a false peace." A great deed had been done that evening; a door had been opened for mankind into a course whose end is even now far from being reached. Those words—not the result of design and premeditation, but of the irresistible impulse of an honest mind brought face to face with the horrible reality of blasphemy—soon echoed through the whole world. Luther's public life had opened; the Reformation had begun.

SECOND PERIOD:—*The First Part of the Public Life of Luther; or, the Time of Progressive Action.*

The pilgrims had come to Wittenberg to buy indulgences, and returned with the theses of Luther in their hands, and the impression of his powerful evangelical teaching in their hearts. Luther was urged on in his great work not by his friends, who were timid and terrified, but by the violence and frenzy of Tetzels and his adherents, and soon afterwards by the despotic acts of the Pope Leo X., who having at first despised the affair as a monk's quarrel, thought he could crush it by arbitrary acts. The national mind in Germany had taken up the matter with a moral earnestness which made an impression not only upon the princes, but even upon bishops and monks. Compelled to examine the ancient history of the church, Luther soon discovered the whole tissue of fraud and imposture by which the canon law of the popes—the decretals—had been, from the ninth cen-

ture downwards, foisted advisedly and purposely, upon the Christian world. There is not one essential point in the ancient ecclesiastical history bearing upon the question of the invocation of saints, of clerical priesthood, and of episcopal and metropolitan pretensions, which his genius did not discern in its proper light. It is a remarkable fact, and must needs be considered by the philosopher of history as a proof of the Spirit of God having guided Luther, that what he saw and said, at the earliest stage of historical criticism, respecting ecclesiastical forgeries and impostures, has all proved true. Soon after Luther, the Centuriatores Magdeburgici, the fathers of criticism as to ecclesiastical history, took the matter up. Of course, the Romanists denied their assertions for two hundred years and wherever they dare, they still come back to the old fables and falsehoods

But the learned discussion has been given up, step by step, reluctantly, and with a very bad grace. Whatever Luther denounced as fraud or abuse from its contradiction to the canonical worship, may be said to have been since openly or tacitly admitted to be such. But what produced the greatest effect at the time were his short popular treatises, exegetical and practical. Among these are particularly remarkable his *Interpretation of the Magnificat*, or the *Canticle of the Virgin Mary*, his deep and earnest *Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, and his *Exposition of the Lord's Prayer*, which latter soon found its way into Italy, although without Luther's name, and which has never yet been surpassed, either in genuine Christian thought or in style. Having resolved to preach in person throughout Germany, Luther appeared in the spring of 1518 in Heidelberg, where a genera

meeting of his Order was held. The count palatine, to whom Luther had been introduced by the elector of Saxony, received him very courteously. In order to rouse the spirit of the professors, he held a public disputation on certain theses, called by him paradoxes, by which he intended to make apparent the contrast of the external view of religion taught by the schoolmen, and the spiritual and energetic view of gospel truth based upon justifying faith. It was here that Bucer, then a Dominican monk, but soon a zealous Reformer and controversialist, and the man who, after Calvin, had among foreigners the greatest influence upon the English Reformation, heard the voice of the gospel in his own heart, and resolved to confess and preach it at the university.

“It is not the pope (said Luther in one of his disputations) who governs the church militant of Christ, but Christ

himself; for it is written that ‘Christ must reign till he has put all his enemies under his feet.’ He evidently has not done so yet. Christ’s reign, in this our world, is the reign of faith; we do not see our Head, but we have Him.”

On his return to Wittenberg in May 1518, Luther wrote and published an able and moderate exposition of the theses, and sent it to some German bishops. He then proclaimed the absolute necessity of a thorough reformation of the Church, which could only be effected, with the aid of God, by an earnest co-operation of the whole of Christendom. But already Rome meditated his excommunication, uttering threats which he discussed with great courage and equanimity, saying, “God alone can reconcile with himself the fallen soul: He alone can dissolve the union of the soul with himself: blessed the man who dies under an unjust ex-

communication." In requesting his superior to send his very humble letter to Pope Leo, in which he declared his readiness to defend his cause, Luther added, "Mark, I do not wish to entangle you in my own perilous affair, the consequences of which I am ready to bear alone. My cause is Christ's and God's." In the mean time, Luther was cited repeatedly to appear before the pope's tribunal at Rome. Leo, indeed, graciously promised to pay the expenses of his journey, which certainly would have been no large outlay, as none would have been required for his return. But Luther constantly declined summonses and invitations, and proposed instead one or other of the German universities as judge. This proposal was, of course, not acceptable to Rome, and therefore he was summoned before the pope's legate in Germany.

The pope's legate was Cardinal Cajetan.



manus. Luther was summoned to appear before him at Augsburg, and all princes and cities were threatened with the interdict, if they did not deliver Luther into the hands of the pope's tribunal. It was in these critical circumstances that Luther formed his acquaintance with Melancthon, who soon became his most faithful friend, and remained his zealous adherent for life. When Melancthon and all his other friends advised Luther not to go to Augsburg to be given up to the machinations of the legate, he replied,—“They have already torn my honor and my reputation, let them have my body, if it is the will of God; but my soul they shall not take.” He undertook the journey, as a good monk, on foot; only provided with letters of recommendation from the elector, and accompanied by two friends, but without a safe conduct. He arrived at Augsburg on the

evening of the 7th October, 1518, almost exhausted by the hardships of the journey. The cardinal and his assistants employed in vain alternately threats and blandishments; scholastic arguments fell powerless, as he answered them by the Bible, and demanded to be refuted by the word of God, to which he showed the decretals to be opposed, and therefore, according even to the declaration of the canonists, of no value. For these reasons he constantly refused to retract, as he was required to do, his two propositions,—the one that the treasure of indulgences is not composed of the merits of Christ; the other, that he who receives the sacrament must have faith in the grace offered to him. Luther left Augsburg after having addressed a firm but respectful letter to the legate; and his friends, who were sure that his life was not safe a moment longer, escorted him before

daybreak out of the town on horseback. On his return to Wittemberg, he found the elector in great anxiety of mind, in consequence of an imperious missive of the cardinal legate. Luther wrote to the prince a dignified letter, saying,—“I would, in your place, answer the cardinal as he deserves for insulting an honest man without proving him to be wrong; but I do not wish to be an incumbrance to your Highness; I am ready to leave your states, but I will not go to Rome.” The elector refused to deliver him up to the legate, or to send him out of the states. Luther would have gone to France if deprived of his asylum in Saxony. The elector, however, having desired him to leave Wittemberg, and Luther being on the point of obeying his orders, the prince, touched by his humility and firmness, allowed him to remain and to prepare himself for a new conference. At the

end of 1518, the papal bull concerning indulgences appeared, confirming the old doctrine, without any reference to the late dispute. Luther had already appealed from the pope to a general council.

The years 1519, 1520, 1521, were the time of a fierce but triumphant struggle with the hitherto irresistible power of Rome, soon openly supported by the empire. The two first of these years passed in public conferences and disputations at Leipzig and elsewhere, with Eck and other Romanist doctors, in which Luther was seconded by the eloquence of the ardent and acute Carlstadt, as well as by the learning and argumentative powers of Melancthon. People and princes took more and more part in the dispute, and the controversy widened from day to day. Luther openly declared that Huss was right on a great many points, and had been un

justly condemned. Wittemberg became crowded with students and inquirers, who flocked there from all sides. Luther not only continued his lectures, but wrote during this period his most important expositions and commentaries on the New Testament,—beginning with the Epistle to the Galatians (Sept. 1519,) which he used to call his own epistle. During the second year (1520) the first great political crisis occurred, on occasion of the death of Maximilian, and ended fatally, in consequence of the total want of patriotic and political wisdom among the German princes. The elector of Saxony was offered by one of the most eminent and influential of his colleagues, the archbishop of Treves, to be chosen emperor; but had not the courage to accept a dignity which he supposed to require for its support a more powerful house than his own. Of all the political acts which

may be designated, with Dante, *ugran vil rifiato*, this was the greatest and most to be regretted, supposing the elector to have been wise and courageous enough to give the knights and cities their proper share in the government, and patriotic enough to make the common good his own.

The German writers have called the Elector Frederic "the Wise," particularly also with regard to this question. But long before Ranke pointed out the political elements then existing for an effective improvement of the miserable German constitution, Justus Möser of Osnabruck had prophetically uttered the real truth,—“if the emperor at that time had destroyed the feudal system, this deed would have been, according to the spirit in which it was done, the grandest or the blackest in the history of the world.” Möser means that if the emperor had embraced the Reformed

faith, and placed himself at the head of the lower nobility and the cities, united in one body as the lower house of a German parliament, this act would have saved Germany. But we ought to go further, and say, to expect such a revolution from a Spanish king was simply absurd. Frédéric alone could, and probably would, have been led into that course, just because he had nothing to rely upon except the German nation, then more numerous and powerful than it ever has been since. The so-called capitulations of the empire, which were accepted by Charles, contained not the slightest guarantee against religious encroachments on the side of Rome.

Persecutions aimed at the life of Luther began very early. Being one day accosted by a stranger, who concealed a pistol in his sleeve, and asked him, "Why do you walk thus alone?" the

intrepid hero answered, "Because I am on the side of God, who is my strength and my shield." The unknown person turned pale and slunk away. The pope's emissaries in Germany openly demanded the death of Luther. Flattery and threats were used alternately to that end. Luther said, "I do not wish for a cardinal's hat: let them allow the way of salvation to be open to Christians, and I shall be satisfied. All their threats do not frighten me, and all their promises do not seduce me." When Francis of Sickingen, the most powerful and spirited of the knights of the empire, and the brave and enlightened Ulrich Von Hütten and others, offered aid, and said, "force of arms was required to drive out the devil," Luther answered in those immortal words: "By the Word the world has been conquered; by the Word the Church has been saved; by the Word



too, she will be restored: I do not despise your offers, but I will not lean upon any one but Christ."

Luther's writings of this period are the finest productions of his pen. His book *On Good Works* is the best exposition of the doctrine of justification by faith. Melancthon says, in reference to this treatise,—“No writer ever came nearer St. Paul than Luther has done.” In the same year (1520) he published that grand address to the nobles of the German nation, *On the Reformation of Christendom*, which may be considered as the finest specimen of the political and patriotic wisdom of a Christian. There he shows the reality and supreme dignity of the universal priesthood of Christians, and at the same time demands a thorough reform of the social system of Germany and Italy, beginning with the abrogation of the usurped power of the pope, while he

calls for a national system of education as the foundation of a better order of things. This address, published on the 26th June 1520, electrified the nation. It was this appeal which first moved the patriotic and sainted spirit of Ulrich Zwingli, the Swiss Reformer, who tried in vain to dissuade Rome from endeavoring to crush Luther by a bull of excommunication. It was too late. The great step had been decided upon.

Luther meanwhile continued his course of preaching and lecturing at Wittemberg, where nearly two thousand students were assembled. He published at this time his *Treatise on the Mass*, in which he applied to the Sacraments the pervading doctrine of faith, proving from Scripture that every Sacrament is dead without faith in God's word and promises. But his most striking work of this period is that on the *Babylonian Captivity of the Church*

(October, 1520), in which he boldly took the offensive against Rome, attacking the papacy in its principles. It is remarkable that in this treatise he speaks of the baptism of infants, who necessarily are incapable of faith, as of an apparent contradiction, which, however, might be defended. Man is to have faith in the baptismal vow, (to be ratified later, after the necessary instruction), and therefore he must not allow himself to be bound by any other vow, and must consider the work of his vocation, whatever it be, as equally sacred with that of priest or monk. Till the Christian Church is organized upon that principle, the Christian people live in Babylonian captivity. In order to please some of his friends, and show to the world that he was not intractable, he addressed a letter to Leo X., and inclosed a treatise, *On the Liberty of the Christian*. He pities the

pope for having been thrown like Daniel into the midst of wolves, and predicts that the Roman court (*Curia Romana*) will fall because she hates reform, and that the world will be obliged, sooner or later, to apply to her the words of the prophet: "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one unto his own country." (Jerem. li. 9). "O most holy father, (he adds), do not listen to those flattering syrens around you!" The treatise itself is a sublime and succinct exposition of the two truths, that by faith the soul acquires all that Christ has, and becomes free through Him; but then it begins to serve His brethren voluntarily from thankfulness to God. The pope's bull arrived in due time; but found the German nation deaf to its curses, and armed against its arguments. It was called Dr. Eck's bull and Luther raised, on the 4th Novem

ber, his voice of thunder against it in a short treatise *Against the Bull of Antichrist*; and, on the 17th of the same month, he drew up, before a notary and five witnesses, a solemn protest, in which he appealed to a general council. After this manifesto, he invited the university, on the 10th of December, 1520, to see the anti-Christian bull burnt before the church door, and said: "Now the serious work begins; I have begun it in the name of God—it will be brought to an end by his might." But where was the power to resist the pope, if the emperor supported the pope's cause? And, indeed, he had promised this support to the pontifical minister soon after his coronation at Aix-la-Chapelle on the 22d October. He declared, however, at the same time, that he must act with every possible regard towards the elector; and this prince had courage enough to propose,

as the only just measure, to grant to Luther a safe-conduct, and place him before learned, pious, and impartial judges. Erasmus, whom he invited, in order to learn his opinion, said,—“There was no doubt that the more virtuous and attached to the Gospel any man was, the more he was found to incline towards Luther, who had been condemned only by two universities, and by them had not been confuted.”

The emperor agreed at last to the proposal of the elector Frederic, and convened a diet at Worms for 6th January 1521, where the two questions of religion and of a reform in the constitution of the empire were to be treated. Luther, though in a suffering state of health, resolved immediately to appear when summoned. “If the emperor calls, it is God’s call,—I must go: if I am too weak to go in good health, I shall have

myself carried thither sick. They will not have my blood, after which they thirst, unless it is God's will. Two things I cannot do,—shrink from the call nor retract my opinions." The nuncio and his party, on their side, moved heaven and earth to procure Luther's condemnation, and threatened the Germans with extermination, saying, "We shall excite the one to fight against the other, that all may perish in their own blood,"—a threat which the papists have carried out to the best of their power during two hundred years. The emperor permitted the nuncio to appear officially in the diet, and to try to convince the princes of the empire there assembled. Alexander tried in vain to communicate to the assembly his theological hatred, or to obtain that Luther should be condemned as one judged by the pope, his books burnt, and his adherents persecuted. The impression

produced by his powerful harangue was only transitory : even princes who hated Luther personally, would not allow his person and writings and the general cause of reform to be confounded, and all crushed together. The abuses and exactions of Rome were too crying. A committee, appointed by the diet, presented a list of one hundred and one grievances of the German nation against Rome. This startled the emperor, who, instead of ordering Luther's books to be burned, issued only a provisional order that they should be delivered to the magistrates. When Luther heard of the measures preparing against him, he composed one of his most admirable treatises,—*The Exposition of the Magnificat, or the Canticle of the Virgin Mary*. He soon learnt what he was expected to retract. “ If that is meant, I remain where I am : if the emperor will call me to have me put to death, I



shall go." The emperor summoned him, indeed, on the 6th March, 1521, to appear before him, and granted him at last a safe-conduct, on which all his friends insisted. Luther, in spite of all warnings, set out with the imperial herald on the 2d April. Everywhere on the road he saw the imperial edict against his book posted up, but witnessed also the hearty sympathies of the nation. At Erfurt the herald gave way to the universal request, and, against his instructions, consented to Luther's preaching a sermon,—none the less remarkable for not containing a single word about himself. On the 16th Luther entered the imperial city amidst an immense concourse of people. On his approach to Worms, the elector's chancellor entreated him, in the name of his master, not to enter a town where his death was decided. The answer which Luther returned was simply this:

“Tell your master, that if there were as many devils at Worms as tiles on its roofs, I would enter.” When surrounded by his friends on the morning of the 17th, on which day he was to appear before the august assembly, he said:—  
“Christ is to me what the head of the gorgon was to Perseus: I must hold it up against the devil’s attack.” When the hour approached, he fell upon his knees, and uttered in great agony a prayer such as can only be pronounced by a man filled with the spirit of Him who prayed at Gethsemane. Friends took down his words; and the authentic document has been published by the great historian of the Reformation. He rose from prayer and followed the herald. Before the throne he was asked two questions, — Whether he acknowledged the works before him to have been written by himself? and whether he would retract what he had said in

them? Luther requested to be told the titles of the books, and then, addressing the emperor, acknowledged them as his; as to the second, he asked for time to reflect, as he might otherwise confound his own opinions with the declarations of the Word of God, and either say too much, or deny Christ and say too little, incurring thus the penalty which Christ had denounced,—“Who-soever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.” The emperor, struck by this very measured answer, which some mistook for hesitation, after a short consultation, granted a day’s delay for the answer, which was to be by word of mouth. Luther’s resolution was taken: he only desired to convince his friends, as well as his enemies, that he did not act with precipitation at so decisive a moment. The next day he employed in prayer and

meditation, making a solemn vow upon the volume of Scripture to remain faithful to the gospel, should he have to seal his confession with his blood. Luther's address to the emperor has been preserved, and is a master-piece of eloquence as well as of courage. Confining his answer to the first point, he said, that "nobody could expect him to retract indiscriminately all he had written in those books, since even his enemies admitted that they contained much that was good and conformable to Scripture. But I have besides," he continued, "laid open the almost incredible corruptions of popery, and given utterance to complaints almost universal. By retracting what I have said on this score, should I not fortify rank tyranny, and open a still wider door to enormous impieties? Nor can I recall what, in my controversial writings, I have expressed with too great harshness against

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the supporters of popery, my opponents, lest I should give them encouragement to oppress Christian people still more. I can only say with Christ,—‘ If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil,’ (John xviii. 23.) I thank God I see how that the gospel is in our days, as it was before, the occasion of doubt and discord. This is the doctrine of the word of God, —‘ I am not come to send peace but a sword,’ (Matt. x. 34.) May this new reign not begin, and still less continue under pernicious auspices. The Pharaohs of Egypt, the kings of Babylon and of Israel, never worked more effectually for their own ruin than when they thought to strengthen their power. I speak thus boldly, not because I think that such great princes want my advice, but because I will fulfill my duty towards Germany, as she has a right to expect from her children.” The emperor, probably in order to confound the

poor monk, who having been kept standing so long in the midst of such an assembly, and in a suffocating heat, was almost exhausted in body, ordered him to repeat the discourse in Latin. His friends told him he might excuse himself, but he rallied boldly, and pronounced his speech in Latin with the same composure and energy as at first; and to the reiterated question, whether he would retract? Luther replied,—“I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to councils, for it is clear that they have often erred and contradicted themselves. I will retract nothing, unless convicted by the very passages of the word of God which I have quoted.” And then, looking up to the august assembly before him, he concluded, saying,—“Here I take my stand: I cannot do otherwise: so help me God. Amen!” The courage of Luther made a deep impression even upon the em

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peror, who exclaimed,—“Forsooth, the monk speaks with intrepidity, and with a confident spirit.” The chancellor of the empire said,—“The emperor and the state will see what steps to take against an obstinate heretic.” All his friends trembled at this undisguised declaration. Luther repeated, “So help me God! I can retract nothing.” Upon this he was dismissed, then recalled, and again asked whether he would retract a part of what he had written. “I have no other answer to make,” was his reply. The Italians and Spaniards were amazed. Luther was told the diet would come to a decision the next day. When returning to his inn, he quieted the anxious multitude with a few words, who, seeing the Spaniards and Italians of the emperor’s household follow him with imprecations and threats, exclaimed loudly, in the apprehension that he was about to be conducted to prison.

The elector and other princes now saw it was their duty to protect such a man, and sent their ministers to assure him of their support. The next day the emperor declared, "he could not allow that a single monk should disturb the peace of the Church, and he was resolved to let him depart, under condition of creating no trouble; but to proceed against his adherents as against heretics who are under excommunication, and interdict them by all means in his power; and he demanded of the estates of the empire to conduct themselves as faithful Christians." This address, the suggestion of the Italian and Spanish party, created great commotion. The most violent members of that party demanded of the emperor that Luther should be burnt, and his ashes thrown into the Rhine, and it is now proved that, towards the end of his life, Charles reproached himself bitterly for not hav



ing thus sacrificed his word for the good of the Church. But the great majority of the German party, even Luther's personal enemies, rejected such a proposition with horror, as unworthy of the good faith of Germans. Some said openly they had a child, misled by foreigners, for an emperor. The emperor decided at last that three days should be given to Luther to reconsider what he had said. The theologians began to try their skill upon him. "Give up the Bible as the last appeal; you allow all heresies have come from the Bible." Luther reproached them for their unbelief; and added: "The pope is not judge in the things that belong to the word of God; every Christian man must see and understand himself how he is to live and to die." Two more days were granted, without producing any other result than Luther's declaration, — "I am ready to renounce the safe-conduct,

to deliver my life and body into the hands of the emperor, but the word of God, never! I am also ready to accept a council, but one which shall judge only after the Scripture." "What remedy can you then name?" asked the venerable archbishop of Treves. "Only that indicated by Gamaliel," replied Luther; "if this council or this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." (Acts v., 38, 39.)

Frederic the Wise knew well that Luther's life was no longer safe anywhere at this moment. Charles pronounced an edict of condemnation, couched in the severest terms. Luther was placed under the ban of the empire. After twenty-one days his safe-conduct would expire, and all persons be forbidden to feed or to give him shelter, and enjoined to deliver him to the emperor

or to place him in safe keeping till the imperial orders should arrive; all his adherents were to be seized, and their goods confiscated; his books burnt; and the authors of all other books and prints obnoxious to the pope and the church were to be taken and punished. Whoever should violate this edict should incur the ban of the empire.

This Draconian edict had been passed by the majority; the friends of Luther, foreseeing the issue, had left Worms previously. Such was the condign punishment that befell the Germans for having chosen as their emperor the most powerful foreign prince of Europe, brought up among the most bigoted of nations. Under these circumstances, Frederic did what he could. In the forest of Thuringia, not far from Eisenach, Luther (who was not in the secret) was stopped by armed knights, set upon a horse, and conducted to the

fortified castle above Eisenach — the Wartburg. Here the dress of a knight was ready for him. He was desired to consider himself as a prisoner, and to let his beard grow. None of his friends, even at Wittemberg, knew what had become of him. He had disappeared; the majority believed he had been kidnapped by his powerful enemies. Such was the indignation of the people at this supposed treachery, that the princes opposed to the Reformation, and even the pope's agents, began to be alarmed, and took pains to convince the people that Luther had not met with ill usage. Luther remained ten months at the Wartburg; and it was here that he began his greatest work, the translation of the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek text. Although suffering much in health from the confinement, which he modified latterly by excursions in the woods around the castle,

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he soon also began to compose new works, and obtained the necessary books through Melancthon, to whom he in time made known that he was safe.

It is a most astonishing fact, highly characteristic both of Luther and of the German nation, that, though for nearly four years, the true doctrine of the gospel had been preached through Germany, and the Romish rites and ceremonies exhibited as abuses, that yet not one single word or portion of these ceremonies had been changed. Luther consciously believed, what may be called the latent conviction of his countrymen, that inward truth will necessarily correct outward errors, and mold for itself fitting forms of expression. "The Spirit of God," he often said, "must first have regenerated minds, imbued with true gospel doctrine; then the new forms will result naturally from that Spirit." But it was clearly an unnatural and

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highly dangerous state of things, that the outward acts of worship should be utterly at variance with the belief of the worshipers; and Luther saw that if he would not take the matter in hand, others were certain to do so; the people themselves might proceed to precipitate acts. Luther felt this, and so strongly, that he broke silence; and in September published a declaration against monkish vows, in the form of theses, addressed to the bishops and deacons of Wittemberg. The audacious attempt of the Cardinal-Archbishop of Mayence, Albert of Brandenburg, to renew at Halle the sale of indulgences, called forth Luther's philippic (1st November) *Against the new Idol of Halle.*

This attack frightened even the court of the elector of Saxony, who was at that time rather of opinion that Luther could do nothing better than to cause himself to be forgotten. "I canno"

allow him to attack my brother elector, and to disturb the public peace." Luther's greatness of soul had elevated the minds of the princes for the moment; they had saved his life, but they wished now to live in peace, such as they had before. Luther was indignant. "Do they think I suffered a defeat at Worms? It was a brilliant victory: so many against me, and not one to gainsay the truth." To Spalatin, the chaplain and adviser of the elector, he thus writes: "How, the elector will not allow me to write! and I, for my part, will not allow him to disallow my writing. I will rather destroy you, and the prince, and every creature! Having resisted the pope, should I not resist his agents?" At the request of Melancthon, he laid aside the treatise he had prepared, but wrote to the Cardinal Archbishop: "The God who raised such a fire out of the spark kindled by

the words of a poor mendicant monk lives still; doubt it not. He will resist a cardinal of Mayence, even though supported by four emperors; for above all He lives to lay low the high cedar, and humble the proud Pharaohs. Put down the idol within a fortnight, or I shall attack you publicly."

The cardinal was frightened by the sternness of the man of God, and had the meanness to play the hypocrite. He thanked Luther by letter for his "Christian and brotherly reproof," promising, "with the help of God, to live henceforth as a pious bishop and Christian prince." Luther, however, could not credit the sincerity of this declaration: "This man, scarcely capable to rule over a small parish, will stand in the way of salvation as long as he does not throw off the mask of a cardinal and the pomp of a bishop."

The fact was the cardinal elector



wanted money. He had had to pay 26.000 ducats to Rome for his pallium, and half of that sum he had charged upon the venders of indulgences in his ecclesiastical province; he himself having to spend all his princely income on his court.

During these nearly ten months of seclusion, Luther's health suffered greatly, and subjected him to visions and hallucinations, in which he believed he saw the devil in form. His absence from his congregation, his students, and his friends and books at Wittemberg, weighed heavily upon him. Still, he held out patiently till events occurred which called upon the Reformer no longer to absent himself. He reappeared, without previous notice, among his friends at Wittemberg, whom he found in great commotion. Thirteen monks of Luther's own convent had left it on the ground of religious conviction, with

the approbation of Melancthon, who also countenanced the general demand for the abrogation of the mass. "What we are to celebrate," said he, "in the communion, is a sign of the grace given us through Christ, but differing from symbols invented by man by its inward power of rendering the heart certain of the will of God." This is the simplest and truest form of Luther's own view of the Lord's Supper, when he looked on it not scholastically. There is a reality in Christ's sacrifice for us; indeed, it is the reality of our destiny that we remember it, as He has bidden His disciples to do: it has therefore naturally an inward force, not an imaginary effect, like looking on a cross and similar outward forms. What calamities would the world have been spared if this view, in its profound simplicity and depth, had not been dressed up in formularies partaking of that

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very scholasticism which the Reformation was to abolish! The prior of the convent discontinued from that time low masses. It was high time, indeed, that this central point of Christian worship should be taken in hand by the Reformers; for at Zwickau, in Saxony, an enthusiast, named Stork, arose, who pretended to have a commission from the archangel Gabriel to reform and govern the Church and the world, and who was supported in this by a fanatic named Thomas Munzer. When they appeared at Wittemberg announcing their visions, even Melancthon was startled, and especially hesitated as to the question of pædo-baptism. Carlstadt, Luther's disciple and friend, advocated the most revolutionary changes. He broke down the images, preached against learning and study, and exorted his hearers to go home and gain their bread by digging the ground.

Luther did not hesitate a moment to condemn the whole movement as a delusion for men who gloried in their own wisdom, which could only cause a triumph to the enemies of reform. At an interview which he had with Munzer and Horst, they said they could prove to him that they had the Spirit; for they would tell him what now passed in his mind. Luther challenged them to the proof. "You think in your own heart that we are right." Luther exclaimed,—“Get thee behind me, Satan,” and dismissed them. “They are quite right,” he said to his friends afterwards; “that thought crossed my mind as to some of their assertions. A spirit evidently was in them, but what could it be but the evil one?” Here we see the difference between Luther and Melancthon. Luther was not startled from his solid judgment as Melancthon had been by this movement; and Melancthon

thon, in after years, was a more violent antagonist of anabaptism than Luther.

It was on the 3d of March, 1522, that Luther left for ever his asylum, and plunged into the midst of struggles very different in their character from those which he had hitherto so victoriously overcome. Before arriving at Wittemberg, he wrote a remarkable letter to the elector:—"You wish to know what to do in the present troublesome circumstances. Do nothing. As for myself, let the command of the emperor be executed in town and country. Do not resist if they come to seize and kill me; only let the doors remain open for the preaching of the word of God." One of the editors of Luther's works observes on the margin,—“This is a marvelous writing of the third and last Elijah.” The elector was touched by Luther's magnanimity. “I will take up his defence at the diet; only let him

explain his reasons for having returned to Wittemberg, and say he did so without my orders." Luther complied, adding,—“I can bear your highness' disfavor. I have done my duty towards those whom God has intrusted to me.” And, indeed, he made it his first duty to preach almost daily the gospel of peace to his flock. “No violence!” he exclaimed, “against the superstitious or unbelieving. Let him who believes draw near, and let him who does not believe stand aloof. Nobody is to be constrained; liberty is essential to faith and all that belongs to it. . . . . You have acted in faith,” he said, “but do not forget charity, and the wisdom which mothers show in the care of their children. Let the reform of the mass be undertaken with earnest prayer. The power of the word is irresistible: the idols of Athens fell not by force, but before the mighty words of the apostle.” This

evangelical meekness of the man who had braved pope and emperor, and knew not fear, acted with divine power upon all minds. The agitation and sedition disappeared. The pretended prophets dispersed, or were silenced in public debate.

On the 21st September, 1522, the translation of the New Testament appeared in two volumes folio, which sold at about a ducat and a half. The translation of the Old Testament was commenced in the same year. Thousands of copies were read with indescribable delight by the people; who had now access to the words of Him whom Luther had preached to them as the author of our salvation, in their mother tongue, in a purity and clearness unknown before, and never surpassed since. By choosing the Franconian dialect in use in the imperial chancery, Luther made himself intelligible both to those whose vernacular

dialect was High German or Low German. Luther translated faithfully but vernacularly, with a native grace which up to this day makes his Bible the standard of the German language. It is Luther's genius applied to the Bible which has preserved the only unity, which is, in our days, remaining to the German nation,—that of language, literature, and thought. There is no similar instance in the known history of the world of a single man achieving such a work. His prophetic mind foresaw that the Scripture would pervade the living languages and tongues all over the earth—a process going on still with more activity than ever.

Meanwhile the vanity and presumption of Henry VIII. induced him to publish a book against Luther, in which he heaped upon Luther every opprobrious epithet; even called in question his honesty and sincerity, and declared



him worthy to be burned. His *Defence of the Seven Sacraments* merely recapitulates the old scholastic tradition without the slightest understanding of the Bible or of the evangelical doctrine. Henry's ambassador declared to the pope, in presenting the book, that the king was now ready to use the sword against Luther's adherents, after having refuted the errors of Luther himself. Luther, after having read the book, declared, contrary to the desire of the elector and of his other friends, that he must answer it. "Look," he writes, "what weapons are used against me: fire and the fury of those stupid Thomists. Let them burn me: alive I shall be the enemy of popery; burnt I shall be its ruin. Everywhere they will find me in their way, like a bear or a lion." In the answer itself he pays the king in his own coin. After having taken the crown from his head and beaten him

like any other controversial writer, he exclaims, — “I cry gospel! gospel! — Christ! Christ! and they cease not to answer,—Usages, usages! ordinances, ordinances! fathers, fathers! The apostle St. Paul annihilates with a thunderstorm from heaven all these fooleries of Henry.” The king wrote to the elector and the Dukes of Saxony, exhorting them to extirpate this heresy, as being the revival of that of Wycliffe. Their answer referred Henry to the future council. The cause of the Reformation suffered nothing from Henry’s attacks and the invectives of his courtiers. The movement against the sacerdotal and monkish vows extended through the whole of Germany — affecting equally priests and laymen. Zealous preachers of the gospel rose from all ranks. Noble and pious women came forward to declare their faith. Luther’s activity was unparalleled. In 1522 he published

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one hundred and thirty treatises, and eighty-three in the following year.

The whole national literature of Germany became Protestant; and it is certainly a remarkable fact, that, in spite of the Reformation having since lost almost one-half of Germany, its literature, as well as its historical learning and philology, still remains Protestant. All the free cities, which were the cradle of the fine arts as well as of the wealth of the country, declared in favor of the Reformation. In Saxony there was, as Luther had proposed and demanded, perfect liberty of conscience: the Romish bishops had their preachers as well as the Reformers.

Luther's heart expanded in the consciousness of the Reformers' success such as he had never hoped to see. But he shrunk from the idea that this work should be regarded as his, and that he should have the honor of it.

“My true disciples,” he said, “do not believe in Luther, but in Jesus Christ; I myself care nothing about Luther. What is it to me whether he be a saint or a miscreant? It is not him I preach, but Christ. If the devil can, let him have Christ; but if Christ remains ours, we also shall subsist.”

When Leo X. died in this year (1522,) Adrian, the Flemish tutor of Charles V., his successor, a single-minded professor, could not (as Jarus tells us) at first conceive how people could find a difficulty in the matter of indulgences, which he had explained so well in his lectures, till a cardinal remarked to him, that the unbelieving people had no faith in indulgences whatsoever, and that some of those who believed in Christ, thought that exactly for that reason they did not want them. “The Church must reform,” said he, “but step by step.” “Yes,” said Luther, “putting some

centuries between every step." Nobody wanted his reforms less than the Romans; and Adrian exclaimed at last,—"How unfortunate is the position of the popes, who are not even free to do good."

In November 1522, the diet assembled at Nuremberg on account of an impending war with the Turks. While the nuncio and the bishops demanded Luther's death, the churches of the imperial free city resounded with the doctrine of the gospel; monks being amongst the most zealous preachers. What a change from the state of things at Worms in April, 1521! The municipal council of the free city declared that if those preachers were to be seized by force, they would instantly set them free by force. The legate was obliged to abandon his plan of arresting them in the pope's name, as the diet declared itself incompetent to do so. Adrian's

sincere avowal of the horrible abuses of Rome confirmed the people in the belief that Luther and the gospel were right, and made his threatening brief, addressed to the elector, whom he declared worthy of death and eternal damnation, appear as ridiculous as it was arrogant. Luther and all his friends, whose advice the elector asked at this critical moment, declared that he ought not to fight for the gospel, seeing that the people without whose consent he could not declare war, would not in the spirit of faith declare for such a measure. But other princes were frightened, because they had no faith whatever, except in superior strength and power of pope and emperor. "Let them take care," said Luther, "if they persecute the gospel, there will be a rebellion and civil war, and the princes will be in danger of losing their dominions. They wish to destroy me.

but I wish to save them. Christ lives and reigns; and I shall live and reign with Him." Indeed, a bloody persecution began in many parts of Germany and in the Netherlands. Four Augustinian monks of Antwerp were the first martyrs; they were burnt on the 1st July, 1523. Their blood called forth a rich harvest of new witnesses in Brussels and elsewhere.

When the successor of Adrian VI., Clement VII., (Julius de Medici,) sent in 1524 the celebrated legate Campeggi to Nuremberg, he intended, according to usage, on passing through Augsburg, to give the people the papal benediction; but finding that the ceremony called forth public derision, the legate entered Nuremberg as much *incognito* as Luther had entered Worms two years before. The German princes asked what had become of the one hundred and one grievances of the German

nation, to which Rome never had deigned to return an answer. Campeggi declared the document to have been considered at Rome merely as a private pamphlet; on which the diet in great indignation, insisted upon the necessity of an universal council, and proceeded to annul the edict of Worms; declaring, however, in their communication to the pope, that "it should be conformed to *as much as possible*;" which, with respect to many princes and cities, meant *not at all*. Finally, it was resolved that a diet, to be held at Spires in November, was to decide on religious differences. Many states which had hitherto kept aloof, — the landgrave of Brandenburg, (not the elector, a strong papist,) at the head, — declared immediately for the reform, and against the seven sacraments, the abuses of the mass, the worship of saints and supremacy of the pope. "That is a good



move," said Luther. "Frederic must lose his electoral hat," cried the Roman agent, "and France and England must interfere." A catholic league was formed, by Bavarian and other bishops, at Ratisbon, under Campeggi's direction and presidency. But the princes were still afraid of the universally spreading national movement. Charles threw his power into the balance, and declared that not the German nation, but the emperor alone, had a right to demand a council, and the pope alone had the right to grant it. His designated successor, his brother Ferdinand, began the bloody work of persecution in the hereditary states of Austria immediately after the congress of the league at Ratisbon. At Passau in Bavaria, and at Buda in Hungary, the fagots were lighted. The dukes of Bavaria followed the same impulse.

Meanwhile, began at Wittemberg

the unhappy dispute about the mode in which the consecration affected the elements in the celebration of the communion enjoined by Christ. Luther as yet had not taken up that doctrinal scholastic opinion, which afterwards produced the fatal schism. In opposing Carlstadt's view, he combated not so much the later Swiss exposition as Carlstadt's false interpretation of the words, "This is my body," which was, that Christ, in pronouncing them, had pointed to his own body, which soon would die. He admitted soon afterwards, in reference to that exposition, in 1520, that he was very near thinking the Swiss interpretation the reasonable view of the case, but that he had rejected the notion as a "temptation," the words of the text seeming to him not to allow of that interpretation.

But in the same manner as this dispute was a prelude to the fatal sacra-

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mental disputes with Zwingle and Calvin, Luther's defeat in the attempt to detach the congregation of a small town (Orlamunde near Jena,) from Carlstadt, who introduced iconoclastic and violent proceedings, proved an index of the critical state of public feeling. Luther felt the urgent necessity of applying the principles of the gospel to Christian worship and to the constitutions of the Church. But, on the first point, he wished changes to be introduced gradually, and rather as a purification of the existing forms, than by an abrogation. While as to the second, he felt that it was not his immediate vocation, and he thought he must leave the work to the princes, and content himself with preaching to them the leading evangelical principles. This, of course, was not the view of the real friends of the Reformation, nor was it consistent with Luther's usual profound

sagacity, but must be regarded as a remnant of the effect produced by his monkish scholastic education brought into accordance with Christianity. His more practical, and perhaps impatient friends wanted to see the pagan condition of the world, with its social relations, changed into a Christian state of things, as an earnest and pledge of the reality of the gospel preaching. Still, for some time longer, Luther and the popular feeling marched peaceably together, and he remained the national as well as the theological leader. It was at this time that he directed a powerful address to the municipal councils of the German towns, in order to exhort them to establish everywhere Christian schools, as well elementary as learned. "Oh, my dear Germans," he exclaims, "the divine word is now in abundance offered to you. God knocks at your door; open it to him

Forget not the poor youth. Look how the ancient Jewish, Greek, and Roman world lost the word of God, and perished. The strength of a town does not consist in its towers and buildings, but in counting a great number of learned, serious, honest, well-educated citizens. Do not fancy Hebrew and Greek to be unnecessary. These languages are the sheath which covers the sword of the Spirit. The ignorance of the original Scriptures was an impediment to the progress of the Waldenses, whose doctrine is perfectly pure. How could I have combated and overthrown pope and sophists, even having the true faith, if I had not possessed the languages? You must found libraries for learned books, — not only the fathers, but also the pagan writers, the fine arts, law, history, medicine, must be represented in such collections.” These expressions prove that from the very beginning

and in the very person of Luther, the Reformation was connected with scholarship,—with philology in its most extended sense, and equally with the highest aspirations of the fine arts.

Here we must conclude this first glorious period of Luther's life, which, taken altogether, has no parallel since the days of the apostle Paul. But the problem to be solved was not to be solved by Luther and by Germany: the progressive, vital element of reformation passed from Germany to Switzerland, and through Switzerland to France, Holland, England and Scotland. Before he descended into the grave and Germany into thralldom, Luther saved (as much as was in him) his country and the world, by maintaining the fundamental principles of the Reformation against Melancthon's pusillanimity: but three Protestant princes and the free cities were the leaders; the confes-

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sion was the work of Melancthon, not the deed of the laity of the nation. The German Reformation was made by a scholastically trained monk, seconded by professors; the Swiss Reformation was the work of a free citizen, an honest Christian, trained by the classics of antiquity, and nursed in true, hard-won civil liberty. That was the providential saving of the world. Luther's work was continued, preserved, advanced by the work of the Swiss and French Reformers. The monk and the Semitic element began; the citizens and the Japhetic element finished. If the one destroyed Judaism, the other converted paganism, then most powerful, both as idolatry and as irreligious learning. But as long as Luther lived he did not lose his supremacy, and he deserved to keep it. His mind was universal, and therefore catholic in the proper sense of the word.

THIRD PERIOD :—*Luther's Life from 1525 to 1546 ; or the Period of Stagnation.*

The first year after Luther's return to Wittemberg was a glorious period : the true halcyon days of the Reform and of Luther's personal history. In the second period of his life, the epic was changed into tragedy ; for the Anabaptist tumult arose, and the war of the peasants broke out in the Black Forest in July, 1524.

The Anabaptist movement of Thomas Munzer was the movement of Carlstadt mixed up with wild enthusiasm, ignorance, rebellion, and imposture. Luther's doctrinal opposition to it was constant and consistent ; but it would have been more effectual if Luther had not involved himself as a schoolman in an indissoluble difficulty. He was safe in defending pædo-baptism ; but that



could be done without ascribing to it the power of individual regeneration; an opinion from which the greatest part of Christendom has most decisively declared its dissent all over the globe. He was equally justified in maintaining the word of the gospel: "Whoever believes, and is baptized, shall be saved;" but he ought not to have forgotten that this is a juxtaposition of two things, of which the one can only be of value as a consequence of the first. This brings the question back to a solemn profession and vow before the Christian congregation of him who, having been instructed in Christ's saving faith, finds himself ready and compelled to make that solemn promise, which St. Peter calls (1st Peter, iii. 21,)—"the promise (or vow) of a good conscience." Munzer and all the other so-called apostles of the Spirit, attacked Luther as a mere worldly man who had sold himself to

the princes. They abolished chaunting and all ceremonies, and committed acts of violence against churches and convents. Luther said to Munzer,—“The spirit who moves thee must be an evil one, for it brings forth nothing but pillage of convents and churches; the greatest robbers on the earth could do no more.” While combating them by preaching and writing, he advised, however, the elector to let them preach freely. “The word of God itself must come forward and contend with them. If their spirit is the true one, Munzer will fear our constraint; if ours is the true one, he will not fear their violence. Let the spirits meet with all might, and fight each other. Perhaps some will be seduced; well, there is no battle without wounds; but he that fights faithfully will be crowned. But if they have recourse to the sword, then defend

your own subjects, and order the Anabaptists to leave the country.”

It was indeed a wonderful faith that produced such toleration in these times, and it had a wonderful result;—the elector’s states remained undisturbed. Munzer fled into Switzerland.

It was otherwise with the war of the peasants. We have already observed that the Reformation did not originate the rebellion of the peasants, but found it prepared. The first coalitions of the peasants against the intolerable rapacity and cruelty of the feudal aristocracy had begun before the close of the fifteenth century; then they broke out along the Upper Rhine, in Alsace, and the palatinate, in 1503; consequently eighteen years before the beginning of Luther’s Reformation. No doubt Luther’s preaching, in the spirit of the gospel, against all the revolting injustice and oppression of the con

science of Christian men, had kept back that movement for a time; but Munzer carried the spirit of rebellion and fanaticism among the peasants and part of the citizens of the countries of the Upper Rhine. The fact was, that all the oppressed inclined towards Luther, and the oppressors, most of whom were the sovereigns, bishops, and abbots, towards the pope. The struggle which now began was therefore between the reforming and the papist party, and it was easily to be foreseen that Luther would soon be dragged into it. Indeed, the revolutionary movement, was already, in January, 1525, extending from the Black Forest to Thuringia and Saxony, the very heart of Luther's sphere of action. The peasants had proclaimed twelve articles, of half biblical half political character. In the introduction to these articles they protest against the imputation of wanting anything but

the gospel applied to the social body. They declare their desire to uphold its injunctions—peace, patience, and union. There is no doubt that many of them were sincere in their professions. At all events, neither the gospel nor its true preachers and followers were the revolutionists, but the wild, selfish, passionate enthusiasts among them and their leaders. Like the Puritans in the following century, the peasants say they raise their voice to God who saved the people of Israel; and they believe that God can save them as well from their powerful oppressors as he did the Israelites from the hand of Pharaoh.

As to what they demanded in their twelve articles, all impartial historians declare that on the whole their demands were just; and all of them are now the law of Germany. As to the influence of the Reformation, the very words of scripture brought forward this time by

the peasants, prove clearly that Luther's preaching of the gospel and of truth had not acted upon the movement as an incentive but as a corrective. It was Luther himself who now, in the critical moment, brought the Word of God to speak out against the insurrection, as being in itself an act of unchristian self-defence, although he acknowledged their case to be very hard, and their cause, on the whole, a just one. Luther's position was grand; he spoke as the arbiter between lord and peasant; in the name of Christ exhorting both parties to peace, and as a good citizen and patriot giving them advice equally practical and Christian. He first speaks thus in substance to the lords:—"I might now make common cause with the peasants against you, who impute this insurrection to the gospel and to my teaching; whereas I have never ceased to enjoin obedience to authority, even to one sc

tyrannical and intolerable as yours. But I will not envenom the wound; therefore, my lords, whether friendly or hostile to me, do not despise either the advice of a poor man, or this sedition; not that you ought to fear the insurgents, but fear God the Lord, who is incensed against you. He may punish you and turn every stone into a peasant, and then neither your cuirasses nor your strength would save you. Put then bounds to your exactions,—pause in your hard tyranny,—consider them as intoxicated,—and treat them with kindness, that God may not kindle a fire throughout Germany which none will be able to extinguish. What you may perhaps lose will be made good to you a hundredfold by peace. Some of the twelve articles of the peasants are so equitable that they dishonor you before God and the world; they cover the princes with shame, as the 109th

Psalm says. I should have yet graver things to tell you respecting the government of Germany, and I have addressed you in this cause in my book to the German nobility. But you have considered my words as wind, and therefore all these demands come now upon you. You must not refuse their demand as to choosing pastors who preach to them the gospel; the government has only to see that insurrection and rebellion be not preached; but there must be perfect liberty to preach the true gospel as well as the false. The remaining articles, which regard the social state of the peasant, are equally just. Government is not established for its own interest, nor to make the people subservient to caprice and evil passions, but for the interest of the people. Your exactions are intolerable; you take away from the peasant the fruit of his labor, in order to spend his money upon



your finery and luxury. So much for you."

"Now, as regards you, my dear friends, the peasants. You want the free preaching of the gospel to be secured to you. God will assist your just cause if you follow up your work with conscience and justice. In that case you are sure to triumph in the end. Those of you who may fall in the struggle will be saved. But if you act otherwise you are lost, soul and body, even if you have success, and defeat the princes and lords. Do not believe the false prophets who have come among you, even if they invoke the holy name of the gospel. They will call me a hypocrite, but I do not mind that. I wish to save the pious and honest men among you. I fear God and none else. Do you fear Him also, and use not His name in vain, that He may not punish you. Does not the word of God say:

‘He who takes up the sword, shall perish by the sword:’ and ‘Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.’ You must not take justice into your own hands; that is also the prescription of the natural law. Do you not see that you put yourself in the wrong by rebellion? The government takes away part of what is yours, but you take away all in destroying principle. Fix your eye on Christ at Gethsemane rebuking St. Peter for using the sword although in defence of his Master, and on Christ on the cross praying for his persecutors. And has not his kingdom triumphed? Why have pope and emperor not been able to put me down? Why has the gospel spread the more the greater the effort they made to hinder and destroy it? Because I have never had recourse to force, but preached obedience even towards those who persecuted me, depending exclusively on God. But what

ever you do, do not try to cover your enterprise by the cloak of the gospel and the name of Christ. If war there must be, it will be a war of pagans, for Christians use other weapons; their general suffered the cross, and their triumph is humility: that is their chivalry. Pray, my dear friends, stop and consider before you proceed further. Your quotations from the Bible do not prove your case."

After having thus spoken out boldly and fearlessly to each party, Luther concludes with a touching expostulation to both. The substance of his address is in these words:—"You see you are both in the wrong, and are drawing the divine punishments upon you and upon your common country, Germany. My advice would be that arbitrators should be chosen, some from the nobility, and some from the towns. You both have to give up something: let the mat-

ter be settled equitably by human law.”

This certainly was the voice of the true prophet of the age, if ever there was any. It was not heard. The lords showed little disposition towards concessions, and what they did offer came too late, when the bloody struggle had already begun. The peasants, excited by Munzer, exceeded, on their side, all bounds, and Luther felt himself obliged, when the stream of rebellion and destruction rolled on to Thuringia and Saxony, to speak out most strongly against them. The princes leagued together (for the empire, of course, did nothing, Charles having full employment in Spain,) and the peasants were routed everywhere. Fifty thousand of their party were slain or butchered by wholesale executions. Among this number there were many of the quietest and most moderate people made

victims in the general slaughter, because they were known or suspected to be friends of the Reformation and of Luther, which, indeed all the citizens and peasants of Germany were at that time.

None felt more deeply this misery, and what it involved in its effects on the cause of the gospel in Germany; and he never recovered the shock. He thus unburdens his soul at the close of this fatal year, which crushed for centuries the rights and hopes of the peasants and laborers, and weakened the towns and cities, the seats of all that was best in the national life:—"The spirit of these tyrants is powerless—cowardly—estranged from every honest thought. They deserve to be the slaves of the people. But by the grace of Christ I am sufficiently revenged by the contempt I have for them, and for Satan their God." And in the next

year he said, "I fear Germany is lost; it cannot be otherwise, for they will employ nothing but the sword."

In all this Luther stands higher than ever, but as a sufferer. He sees the work in Germany is lost for this time. He submits, and is supported by his faith. So he is consoled when he sees how Ferdinand of Austria and the Duke of Bavaria imprison and slaughter Christians on account of the gospel, and that not only the pope and the emperor are leagued together against the Reformation, but also the king of France, besides the king of England. All the powers of the world are against him : Germany is doomed to perish, but the word and the work of God cannot perish. Even the sad results of a general visitation of the churches which he undertook throughout the states of the elector did not shake his faith. He sees how ignorant and savage all these

wars and revolts have rendered even the Protestant congregations; but he says the Spirit of God will not forsake them. The elector Frederic, Luther's timid but honest supporter, had descended into the tomb on the 5th May, 1525, confessing on his death-bed his firm belief in Christ as his only Saviour. His successor, John, known by the well-deserved name, John the Constant, followed in his footsteps, and was a firm friend to Luther.

But the Romish league also gained friends in the north of Germany. Duke George of Saxony had, in July of this year, concluded at Dessau an alliance against the Reformation with Albert of Brandenburg, archbishop of Mainz and Magdeburg, and with the Dukes of Brunswick, and proved himself in earnest by causing two citizens of Leipzig to be beheaded for having the writings of Luther in their houses. At the same

time, Charles declared from Spain his intention to hold a diet at Augsburg, evidently in order to crush the Reformation by means of the Catholic league acting in the name of the empire. His victory at Pavia made him more than ever the master of Germany. Finally, the remains of the party of Munzer, declared they would take the life of Luther as a traitor.

It was under such auspices that Luther decided at last to take a wife, as he had long advised his friends among the priests and monks to do. They had often reminded him of his profession, and of the duty of himself setting an example to prove his sincerity. His father himself urged him continually to marry. All around him was now in a stationary, if not a retrograde state. The university of Wittemberg had suffered much during the late troubles, and it was generally believed that the



new elector did not mean to support it. Luther's warm and loving heart opened the more readily to the contemplation of matrimonial union with Catherina von Bora, a lady twenty-four years of age, of a noble Saxon family, in 1523, who had left her convent, together with eight other sisters, in order to worship Christ without the oppression of endless ceremonies, which gave neither light to the mind nor peace to the soul. Since that time they had lived together in utter retirement, forming a free Christian community. Pious citizens at Torgau were their protectors, and by them they were presented to Luther in the convent of the Augustinians. Soon followed, as we have seen, the great regenerative movement of the Christian worship; and Luther appeared, on the 9th October, 1524, before the congregation in the simple habit of a secular priest. Luther soon remained alone in the con

vent; all the monks had left it. At the end of the year he sent the key to the elector, who, however, desired him to continue to inhabit it. In the mean time, Luther had observed and witnessed the Christian faith and life of Catherina von Bora, and on the 11th of June he married her, in the presence of Lucas Cranach, the celebrated painter, and of another friend, as witnesses. Catherina von Bora had no dowry, and Luther lived on his appointment as professor; he would never take money for any of his books, but only some copies for presents. His marriage was a happy one, and was blessed with six children. Luther was a tender husband and the most loving of fathers.

The princes who were friendly to the Reformation gradually gained more courage; the Elector John of Saxony established a principle in his states that all rites should be abrogated which

were contrary to the Scriptures, and that the masses for the dead be abolished at once. The young Landgrave Philippe of Hesse gained over the son of the furious Duke George to the cause of the Reformation. Albert, Duke of Prussia, had established it at Königsberg, as hereditary duke, abolishing the vows of the Order, whose master he had been, saying:—"There is only one Order, and that is Christendom." At the request of the pope, Charles placed Albert under interdict as an apostate monk. The evangelical princes found in all these circumstances a still stronger motive to act at Augsburg as allies in the cause of the evangelical party; and when the diet opened in December, 1525, they spoke out boldly:—"It is violence which brought on the war of the peasants. If you will by violence tear the truth of God out of the hearts of those who believe, you will draw greater

dangers and evils upon you." The Romanist party was startled. "The cause of the holy faith" was adjourned to the next diet at Spires. The landgrave and the elector made a formal alliance in February, 1526, at Torgau.

Luther being consulted as to his opinion, felt helpless. "You have no faith; you put not your trust in God; leave all to him." The landgrave, the real head of the evangelical alliance, perceived that Luther's advice was not practical—that Luther forsook the duty of self-defence and the obligation to do one's duty according to the dictates of reason, in religious matters as well as in other political questions. But the alliance found no new friends. Germany showed all her misery by the meanness of her princes and the absence of any great national body to oppose the league formed by the pope, the emperor, and the Romanists, throughout

Europe. The archbishop of Treves preferred a pension from Charles to the defence of the national cause. The evangelically-disposed palatine desired to avoid getting into trouble on that account. The imperial city of Frankfort, thus surrounded by open enemies and timid friends, declined to accede to the alliance. There was more national feeling and courage in the Anglo-Saxon north of Germany. The princes of Brunswick, Luxemburg, Mecklenburg, Anhalt, and Mansfeld, assembled at Magdeburg, and made a solemn and heroic declaration of their resolution to pledge their "estates, lives, states, and subjects, for the maintenance of the holy word of God, relying on Almighty God, as whose instrument they would act." The town of Magdeburg (which then had about three times as many inhabitants as now) and Duke Albert of Prussia adhered to the alliance. The

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league doubled its efforts. Charles, strong and rendered safe by the peace of Madrid concluded with Francis, sent word from Seville in March, 1526, through the Romish Duke Henry of Brunswick, that he would soon come himself to crush the heresy. Luther saw the dangers crowding around him: his advice was, — “We are threatened with war; let us force our enemies to keep the peace, conquered by the Spirit of God, before whose throne we must now combat with the arms of prayer; that is the first work to be done.”

Towards the end of 1525, Luther had resolved to answer a book which had been written against him in the previous autumn by Erasmus, under the catching title “*On Free Will*.” Erasmus was in his heart rather a skeptic: he would in his earlier days have professed openly the cause of the gospel, and defended it with his superior eru

dition and knowledge, had he believed in its success; but neither the Swiss nor the German Reformation gave him that certainty, and thus, at last, he gave way to King Henry and others, who urged him to attack Luther. No controversy has been less generally understood than this; but it may also be said that it might have been carried on not only with less malice by Erasmus, but also with more speculative skill by Luther. The antagonism is essentially the same as that of Augustine and Pelagius, or that between the Jansenists and Jesuits; a better speculative method and a deeper philosophy of the mind have since shown how the scholastic method never could solve that most important as well as most difficult problem. We have no hesitation in saying that the result of dialectic metaphysics is no other than that Luther was perfectly right and Erasmus totally wrong, in this dispute;

but it was hopeless from the beginning. Erasmus defined free will as the faculty of man to decide for himself, be it for good or evil. Consequently to deny his thesis in this sense would have been to deny the moral responsibility of man. But Luther's ideas respecting moral free will were as dissonant from this terminology as St. Paul's reasoning on faith, from the use of that word in the sense in which St. James employs or rather attacks it. In regard to Luther's terms and fundamental ideas, we have touched upon them in speaking of the influence of Tauler and of the *Theologia Germanica* upon his mind, when he was disturbed by what appeared to him the dreadful consequences of the doctrine of grace and election. The theology of the German school of the fourteenth century rested upon a simpler because a deeper basis than that of Augustine, and, more lately, of Calvin.



and Pascal. There is in man, as a creature, the power of self-will; this is not only evil as such, but the root of all evil, and sin. The power of deciding whether or not to commit an action is therefore nothing but the power of measuring and contrasting selfish principles, neither of which being good, can produce good actions. There is no power against this selfishness of the creature but the divine principle. This, the old German school maintained, is equally an inherent element in man,—not as a creature, but as God's image,—and the instrument of the infinite, divine Spirit, which is essentially goodness, and love of what is good and true as such, apart from any reference to ourselves. To follow up this view successfully, it is evidently necessary not to establish an absolute separation between the divine principle in itself (in God, the infinite) and in man: and this was not clearly

understood by Augustine (whose influence upon Luther was paramount, in consequence of his earliest impressions,) and still less skillfully used by Luther. The absurdities to which, as each of the combatants proved of his opponent, the consistent following up of an antagonistic principle conducts, are shown by Kant to be the necessary organic consequence of our reasoning with finite notions upon the infinite; his antinomies of free will and necessity are those of Erasmus and Luther, divested of theological and dogmatic terms. But the same philosophy (and Kant himself in his *Moral Philosophy*, and his *Philosophy of Religion*,) shows that Christianity and the analysis of conscience and moral consciousness of ourselves teach equally what Luther maintained against Erasmus. The rationalism of Erasmus and the Jesuits is condemned by this philosophy; and whatever may

be thought of the philosophical demonstration (which we think capable of great simplification,) St. John and St. Paul are certainly irreconcilable with it. "Erasmus ignores God," said Luther, "and that word is more powerful than any scholastic argument." Erasmus felt himself crushed by Luther's strong hits, against which his eloquence availed him nothing. "The victory must remain," Luther said, "with stammering truth, not with lying eloquence;" and he concluded thus: "Who ever possessed so much science and eloquence, and such art in speaking and in writing? I have nothing of all this; but I glory in one thing—I am a Christian. May God raise you in the knowledge of the gospel infinitely above me, so that you may surpass me as much in this respect as you do already in all others." Erasmus henceforth lost all measure and philosophical equanimity,

never having sought truth for its own sake.

The diet of Spires, which was to put an end to Luther's Reformation, opened on June 25, 1526. Ferdinand indeed republished, on the 3d of August, the decree of Seville, enjoining strict execution of the edict of Worms; but, in the mean time, Clement the VII. having quarreled with Charles, and Ferdinand being called to Hungary in order to maintain against Soliman and other competitors the crowns of Hungary and Bohemia, left to him by King Louis after the battle of Mohacz, Charles commissioned the famous Captain Frundsberg (the same who had good-naturedly accosted Luther at Worms, and who was devoted to the evangelical cause) to enlist an army in Germany against the pope, and thousands hastened to join his ranks in consequence. And thus the Reformation

was saved this time, and a proposition presented by the cities was accepted, "that until a council met, every governor should, within his own states, act according to his conscience." Within a year, if not a universal, at least a national council was to meet. In consequence, the Reformation had time to consolidate itself from 1526 to 1529. The man of Germany at that time among the princes was the landgrave, Philip of Hesse, and he was enlightened by a citizen. James Sturm, the deputy of Strasburg at the diet of Spires, had convinced him that the basis of the true evangelical church was the acknowledgment of the self-government of the church by synods composed of representatives of the whole Christian people. Thus the first Protestant constitution—that agreed upon in Hesse—was essentially that which has proved since to be the most universal and the most power-

ful. For that constitution is neither Lutheran nor Anglican, but synodal Christianity, which has converted and is now converting and conquering the world. The constitution acknowledged the episcopal element, but not episcopal rule, — sovereignty being invested in the people of God. We admit (say the articles) no word but that of our sovereign pastor. Bishops and deacons are to be elected by the Christian people; bishops are to be consecrated by the imposition of hands of three bishops; and deacons may be instituted by imposition of the hands of the elders. The general synod is to be held annually, consisting of the pastor of each parish and of pious men elected from the midst of each church, or rather congregation, or from single churches. Three men are to be elected yearly to exercise the right of visitation. This was soon found to be an inconvenient form; six

superintendents (episcopi) for life were substituted. This board of superintendents became afterwards an oligarchy, and at last a mere instrument of the state—the consequence of the disruption of Germany and the paralysis of all national institutions. Luther had professed already, in 1523 and in 1524, principles entirely identical with those established in 1526 in Hesse. But there his action ceased; he left to the princes what they had no mind to carry out; and what could a people do cut up into four hundred sovereignties? Never, however, did Luther acknowledge Cesaropapism or Erastianism, as a principle and as a right. He considered the rights of the Christian people as a sacred trust, provisionally deposited in the hands of their representatives. “Where (he asked) are the people to form the synods? I cannot find them.” This was a political calamity or mistake,

but it was not a treason to the rights of the Christian people. Still more did Luther abhor the rapacity of the nobility and of the courtiers to possess themselves of the spoils of the Church. It was Melancthon's influence which facilitated the despotic system, and hampered the thorough reform of the forms of worship. Luther withdrew from a sphere which was not his. He composed, in 1529, the small and great Catechisms, of which the former has maintained its place as a guide of popular doctrine up to this day; but when measures of persecution were proposed, he raised his voice against them. He wrote, in 1528, *False Teachers are not to be put to Death; it suffices to Remove them*. While Luther preached this doctrine, the most bloody persecution went on in the estates of the elector of Brandenburg (where the electress professed courageously the principles of the gos



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pel,) in Bavaria, and above all, in the hereditary states of Austria. In February 1528, the impetuous landgrave was on the point of committing a rash act, in consequence of a forged document which had been shown to him, purporting to be a secret convention to assassinate Luther and Melancthon, and crush the evangelical princes. Philip infected the elector with his apprehensions, and violent measures of persecution were to be resorted to, when Luther and Melancthon both gave, as their solemn advice, this verdict,—“The attack must not come from our side, and the guilt of bloodshedding must not come upon us. Let the emperor know of this odious conspiracy.” The elector, however, assembled his troops; but the forgery was soon discovered when the document was communicated to the Romanist princes. The attitude taken by the Protestant princes had, however, the

effect of making the archbishop of Mainz renounce, in 1528, the spiritual jurisdiction he had hitherto exercised over Saxony and Hesse. But among the public at large, all believed in the existence of a secret plot against the evangelical party.

Under these auspices was opened the celebrated diet of Spires in 1529. The emperor, who, in the mean time, had taken Rome, and annihilated the ambitious plans of Clement VII., now took again to his natural part. German credulity and good nature had served his turn. Now that he felt himself master of the field, he spoke as a Spanish despot; the elector and landgrave were forbidden to celebrate divine worship in their hotels, as they had done in 1527, after the use of a church had been denied them. The imperial commissioners desired to return to the edict of Worms of 1521. The solemn act of

toleration voted by the diet of 1527 was abrogated by an arbitrary act of the emperor alone, contrary to the constitution of the empire. Luther, the proscribed, was not present; but Melancthon, who had accompanied the princes, reported to him what passed. The majority of the diet passed at last, on 7th April, a resolution, that where the edict of Worms could not be executed without fear of revolution, no further reform would be allowed. This evidently was nothing but the intended forerunner of the restoration of Popery.

It was against this iniquitous decree that the elector, the landgrave, the margrave of Brandenburg, the prince of Anhalt, and the chancellor of Luneburg, together with the dignitaries of the towns, laid down that solemn protestation from which originates the name of "Protestants." "The diet has overstepped its authority," they said; "our

acquired right is, that the decree of 1526, unanimously adopted, do remain in force until a council can be convened. Up to this time the decree has maintained the peace since, and we protest against abrogation." Of thirty-five free cities, fourteen stood out firmly, when Ferdinand threatened them with the loss of their privileges. Strasburg, which was at the head of the protesting cities, was placed by this most arbitrary act under the interdict. To the princes Ferdinand declared there remained nothing for them but to submit; and he closed the diet without awaiting the resolutions of the evangelical princes, who had passed, as was the constitutional custom, into an adjoining apartment in order to deliberate. The princes then drew up their declaration, and caused it to be read to the diet, which had remained sitting when Ferdinand rose with the imperial commissioners.

The celebrated Protest of the 15th April, 1529, is one of the finest and noblest documents of Christian history, displaying an apostolic faith in Christ and Scripture, and a dignified adherence to national law as far as constitutional liberties are concerned. The protesting princes and cities claim as their right, as Germans, what they consider a sacred duty as Christians,—freely to preach the word of God and the message of salvation, that all who will hear it may join the community of the believers. This great act was, besides, an earnest of true evangelical union; for it was well known that most of the cities inclined more towards Zwingli's than towards Luther's view of the sacrament. And this union was not a negative but a positive one; it was founded on the faith, energetically and sincerely professed by Œcolampadius, as the organ of the Swiss Reform-

ed churches, that, "with the visible symbols invisible grace is given and received."

If one considers this great act impartially, it is impossible not to see that neither Luther nor Melancthon were the real leaders of the time. Already in 1526, Luther had so little real comprehension of what ought to be done, or was now doing in Germany, to preserve the gospel from destruction, that he wrote to a friend on the very same day that the decree of that first diet at Spire was published:—"The diet is going on in the German way,—they drink and they gamble; for the rest, nothing is done there." He shows no sympathy for the first attempt made in Hesse at self-government of the church; still less did he see the importance of the great act now achieved at Spire by the combined courage and Christian common sense of some few princes, and all cities

which could act freely. It was evident that Charles was now, after the peace of Cambray, perfect master of Germany; so far, at least, as to make it impossible that Germany should become a Protestant nation, and that the protesting princes and cities had seen the necessity of strengthening that alliance of which they had just laid the foundation. Luther dissuaded the elector from sending deputies to the meeting agreed upon to be held at Schmalkalden. "In silence and rest will be your strength," was his vote. The elector sent deputies in order to hinder that anything should be decided. Luther was proud of this success. "Christ the Lord will deliver us without the landgrave, and even against the landgrave," was his saying. This apparent blindness and perversion of mind in Luther at this time admits of twofold explanation. The first is Luther's loyal and sound policy. He ab-

horred rebellion, and shuddered from a civil war, even if it should be unavoidable as self-defence. He besides saw clearly that the princes, divided among themselves as they were, could do nothing against the emperor without the best part of the nation, represented by the cities; and that here, too, there was want of mutual trust and good will, and above all of unity. But this key opens only the outer door to Luther's mind. To understand him, when he seems proof against reason, and reasoning even his own, it is necessary to consider his unshaken faith, and that he partook of the quietism of his German master, Tauler, and the *Theologia Germanica*. "Suffer God to do his work in you and about you," was the motto of that school. But the scholastic training also had its influence as to his view of the Zwinglian Reformation, and it centred in Luther's sacramentalism



This point requires a more ample consideration.

It must be confessed that there was a theological scruple at the bottom of Luther's opposition to a vigorous Protestant alliance and national attitude, which was sure not to bring on war, but to prevent it by making the execution of the aggressive plans of the pope and emperors impossible. This betrays itself, first, in an uneasiness about Zwingli's rising influence in Germany; and, second, as a doctrinal idiosyncrasy respecting the sacrament of the communion. Philip of Hesse instantly saw through this, and said,—"I see they are against the alliance on account of the Zwinglians; well, let us see whether we cannot make these theological differences disappear." It is well known that all the efforts made to effect a union between the Zwinglian and Lutheran parties, from the conference at

Marburg, in 1529, to the end of Luther's life, were fruitless; and it is impossible not to admit that the fault was Luther's, and that he became aware of that only on his deathbed. As we are thus arrived at the deepest tragedy of Luther's life and of the history of Protestantism, and as we must endeavor, within the narrow limits of an article, to establish historical truth on these important points, as far as it is indispensable for a true and philosophical view of Luther's life, we think it unnecessary to prove that there were no mean passions at work in Luther's mind; but we will say shortly that it was the great tragedy of the Christian mind during more than one thousand years to which Luther paid now his tribute.

When Luther was raised above himself by the great problem before him, in that glorious period of action, from 1518 to 1524, he considered the sacra

ments altogether as a part of the services of the church, and a secondary point, in comparison with the right view of faith, or the inward Christianity which implies necessarily an unselfish, believing, and thankful mind. Having come to the conviction that there was no inherent virtue in the elements abstractedly from the communion, it was indifferent to him how the spirituality of the action and the real presence, even the transubstantiation, might be reconciled with that faith. But when he felt himself called upon at a later period to form a theory respecting the doctrine of the sacrament, he could never get free from the action of those two theological schools, the mystical German and the Latin scholastic, in the point where they combined. Thus, to his end Luther firmly believed that the act of the priest pronouncing the words, "This is my body,"

produced a change in the elements, making them the body and blood of Christ, which he interpreted, however, as meaning the whole creature of Christ. Now, nothing was ever more historically erroneous. It has been shown elsewhere by the writer of this article, through an uninterrupted chain of documentary evidence of the very liturgies, from the second to the sixth century, that the recital of the words of the institution was nothing but the historical introduction to a prayer of blessing for the communicants. This prayer invoked the Spirit of God to descend upon the assembled worshiping congregation. The first step which unconsciously led to misunderstandings, was, that the blessing of God was also called down upon the elements in order to make the food prepared for the faithful the body and blood of Christ. The consecration, in other words, was not the recital

of the words of institution, but a prayer, down to the time of Basilius, extemporized, or at least freely spoken, and always ending with the Lord's Prayer. It is a tragical complication that the question as to what the elements became,—a question unknown and even unintelligible during the first five centuries,—should have entangled the mighty evangelical mind of the Reformer, whose appointed work was the destruction of the Romish system of delusion, founded upon a total perversion of the fundamental Christian notions respecting sacrifice, priest, and atonement. It was this fatal ignorance of the oblation of the sound and organic, as well as the morbid Christian worship development, which blinded Luther to such a degree as not only to put a simply absurd interpretation upon the words of the institution, but to base the question of Christian communion between evangel-

ical Christians upon the same, instead of allowing it to be freely discussed as a scholastic question. When staking all upon what he called a literal interpretation of the words, "This is my body," he ought to have acknowledged at least, that others might as well take objection, if not to the absurdity of such a meaning, at least to the liberty which Luther claimed for himself at the same time, of making the body stand for the whole life contained in it, not to speak of the objection founded upon the words of institution as we find them in Luke and St. Paul.

After these general observations, our historical relation of what remains to be told of Luther's life may be very short.

The first event was the conference of Marburg. The undaunted spirit of the landgrave, and the heroic self-devoted spirit of Zwingli, who accepted the invitation at the evident risk of his life

brought about that celebrated meeting on the first five days of October, 1527. The frank and liberal declarations and concessions of the Swiss Reformers soon cleared away all shadows of difference and dissent, except that about the sacrament. In the half public disputation of the 2d of October, Zwingli embarrassed Luther by observing, that if the body of Christ was in the bread and wine, in any other than a spiritual sense, he must be present in a given place, by the very nature of matter, and not above matter, in heaven. Luther parried that stroke by saying,—“I do not mind its contradicting nature, provided it do not contradict the faith.” Still less could he disentangle himself from the words of Christ in the sixth chapter of St. John, which Zwingli declared he could not discard, as it was a text and a clear one. Not more satisfactory was Luther’s appeal to the

fathers. The discussions of the four following days, however, resulted in recognizing the point of difference, but reducing its expression to the mildest form, and placing it in the background, as compared with the full statement of the points on which both parties were united. Tears of joy filled all eyes; and Zwingli, with Œcolampadius and Bucer, returned satisfied, although the promised alliance between Germany and Switzerland was not concluded owing to Luther's reluctance. Zwingli had triumphed; his views became naturalized in Germany where hitherto they were little known, and the dreadful words of Luther,—“Submit yourselves; believe as we do, or you cannot be acknowledged as Christians,” were forgotten. But no sooner had Luther returned to Wittemberg than he modified the articles in an exclusive sense, which necessarily shocked and alienated the Reformed party.



The issue of the conference at Marburg was a sad prelude to the great and decisive diet to be held at Augsburg in 1530,—the diet immortalized by the first confession of evangelical Christendom. All the appearances were changed; the elector, who, as well as the landgrave, went there in great pomp, was received by the emperor in the most flattering manner. All was to be peace and concord in Germany. Behind the scenes we see the emperor quieting his brother Ferdinand, the head of the Romish and fanatical party, who protested against such encouragement to heresy. He writes to him:—  
“I shall go on negotiating without concluding anything; fear nothing if I even should conclude; there will never be pretexts wanting to you to chastise the rebels, and you will find people enough too happy to offer you their power as a means of vengeance.”

Charles was an Austrian tyrant and a Spanish bigot, and a great politician of the Italian school, which has procured him, even from historians of our time, the name of a great man. The only reason why he did not now follow the advice of the cardinal-legate and the Spaniards, and of his own brother Ferdinand, was simply that he thought the good Germans would do the work of destruction themselves, and that in the mean time he would have in them check upon the pope. But in his own mind he was ready to sacrifice to the bigoted party all the constitutional rights of the diet, as he had sacrificed that wonderful republic of Florence to the Medici family at the request of the holy father, who (said Charles) could not demand anything wrong: of course, least of all in a case which regarded his own house!

The diet of Augsburg is the bright

point in the life of the Elector John the Constant, as the conference of Marburg is in that of the landgrave. When the emperor's ministers, who preceded him at Augsburg, announced to the elector the emperor's intentions, in order to intimidate him, he said,—“If the emperor intends to stop the preaching of the gospel, I shall immediately betake myself to my home.” Luther had been left at Coburg, the nearest safe place for the proscribed, and was consulted daily. He told the elector he had no right to say so; “the emperor was his master, and Augsburg was an imperial town.” Grand and heroic, although erroneous, advice of the man whose life must have been the first sacrifice of a policy which the elector meant to resist! The lawyers, however, were here also in fault; their Bysantine notions of imperial rights made them timid in the application of the principles of the

German constitution. The Protestant princes had a clear constitutional right to resist the emperor, standing upon the resolutions and the edict of Worms, and the solemn declaration of Spires. Melancthon himself thought they might maintain the right of preaching the gospel, only abstaining from any controversial point. But undoubtedly those were right who advised the elector to remain. As to the chief practical point, Chancellor Bruck confirmed the elector in his resolution not to allow the preaching of the gospel to be interdicted to him and his friends. As to alliances and leagues, the elector said,—“I have formed no secret alliances; but I will show those I have entered into if the others will show theirs.” In the mean time Melancthon had by the middle of April prepared the articles of the confession with their defence, the so-called anology. Luther sat all the time in his

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solitary castle. "It is my Sinai," he said, "where I lift up my hands to pray, as Moses did during the battle." He worked at the psalms and the prophets (he translated here Jeremiah and Ezekiel,) and dedicated his hours of recreation to a popular edition of what was called *Æsop's Fables*, as Socrates did in his prison. "I am making a Zion out of this Sinai, and build there three tents, viz., one for the psalms, one for the prophets, one for *Æsop*;" a truly German saying, which the historian of the Reformation ought not to have censured. How could Luther endure his solitude in that tremendous crisis which, as far as the affairs of Germany were concerned, he saw in darker colors than anybody, unless he had some recreation of this kind. But besides, his object was to place his *Æsop* (which contains many compositions of his own) in the hands of the people, instead of a

common popular book of the time, of the same title, of the lowest and most immoral description. It was also in this solitude that he wrote that admirable letter to his son Hans, with the description of the garden of wonders. While here he received the news of his father's death, which affected him deeply, so that his health began to give way, and his hallucinations, or waking dreams, recommenced. The news of the league between Charles V., Francis I., the Pope, and Venice, roused at times the political spirit which was in him. "I do not believe a word," he said, "as to the reality of such a league. *Monsieur par ma foi!* (Francis) cannot forget the battle of Pavia; *Monsieur in nomine domini* (Clement VIII.) is, first, a Welsh (Italian,) which is bad enough; secondly, a Florentine, which is worse thirdly, a bastard, a child of the devil; and, fourthly, he will never forget the

indignity of the plundering of Rome. The Venetians, finally, are Venetians, and they have reasons enough to hate the posterity of Maximilian. Poor Charles, he is like a sheep among wolves; God will save him!" There is the sound politician and the loyal German, hoping against hope, and trusting his prince's promises as long as he breathes!

He wrote letters full of comfort to the elector, and at the same time addressed one of his most powerful writings to the clergy assembled in the diet at Augsburg, in which he shows them the absurdity of their system, and the unchristian spirit of their claims. The address concludes with the prophetic verse:—

"Pestis eram vivus; moriens ero mors tua  
Papa!"

["O Pope, thy plague I was in life; in death I  
shall be thy destruction!"]

On the 4th of June Gattinara, the chancellor of Charles, died—an Italian, who most earnestly wished a real reform of the church; and the advocates of persecution got the upper hand. On the side of the Protestants, the Swiss party began to suspect Melancthon, and complained of the use of Latin chants and surplices in Saxony; while, on his side, Melancthon detested what he called the seditious principles and worldly reasoning of the Swiss. Soon afterwards, we see him ready to give up some of the essential points to the emperor, who, on his approach to Augsburg, said:—“What do the electors want? I shall do what I like.” Well had he learned in Spain the lessons of tyranny which Cardinal Ximenes knew so well to apply under Philip II. But he prayed four hours every day, so that the people said (as he scarcely ever spoke,)—“He talks more with God than with men.’



When in the conference with the Protestant princes, he demanded of them to cease from their present mode of worship, they declared that their conscience did not allow them to do so, and the margrave of Brandenburg, bowing down towards Charles, and putting his hands upon his neck, cried out,—“Rather than allow myself to be deprived of the word of the Lord, and rather than deny my God, I will have my head cut off at your majesty’s feet.” This startled the Spaniard. “Dear prince,” he exclaimed, “not the head, not the head!” Imprisonment will do, he thought all the while, and those incautious words betray that thought. This was all his Sacred Cæsarean Majesty deigned to utter during the diet. Great was his wrath when the princes declared indignantly that they would not consent to follow the procession of the host at the festivals of *Corpus Do-*

*mini.* Why not worship a wafer which the priest has made God? And why not show this respect to the emperor and cardinal? asked Ferdinand. "We can and we will worship none but God," they unanimously declared. Their worship went on, and the vast church of the Franciscans was always crowded; an eloquent Zwinglian preached powerful sermons from the book of Joshua about the people of Israel in the face of Canaan. Charles was furious; an insidious compromise was proposed; the emperor would name preachers who should simply read the epistles and gospel of the day, and the ordinary prayer of confession before the mass. The pusillanimity of Melancthon, and the legal opinions of some of the lawyers of the Protestant princes as to the emperor's power in an imperial town, overcame the repugnance of the elector. All the Protestant preachers left the

place in dismay. The whole town was in consternation. "Our Lord God," exclaimed the elector, "has received order to hold his tongue at the diet!" Luther all the while had been quiet, waiting in patience. But this was too much for him. "This is the first step," said he, "to the demand that we give up our faith. We have to fight against the gates of hell." "Keep up your courage," he wrote to Melancthon, "for you are the ambassador of a great King." The elector and his theologians thought it justifiable that, in virtue of his office as grand marshal of the empire, he should bear before the emperor the sword of state, when the latter attended the mass of the Holy Ghost at the opening of the diet, on which occasion an Italian archbishop preached a most fanatical and insulting sermon against the Germans, as being worse enemies of God than the Turks. In the imperial

opening speech, Charles spoke of the lamentable dissensions which encroached upon the imperial majesty, and must produce sedition and murder. The Protestants were required to present their confession. The elector signed it first; four other princes and two cities after him, without any observation; the landgrave of Hesse, however, did not sign it without saying he did not agree as to the doctrine of the communion. The article says,—“That the body and blood of Christ are verily present, and are administered in the Lord’s Supper to those who partake of it [and we disapprove those who teach otherwise.”] The words in brackets were left out in later editions made during Luther’s lifetime. On this occasion the princes took really the lead, and the whole was done as a great national, not as a sacerdotal work, in spite of poor Melancthon’s scruples. This good man was

indeed entirely out of his sphere, and lost his time, and committed the cause of Protestantism, by trying to bring about a compromise where there was no possibility of an honest understanding. In the mean time, Luther was left in complete and cruel ignorance of all that was going on; and when at last the letters of Melancthon arrived, they were full of fears and sad misgivings. During all this anxious time, Luther sought and found his comfort in constant prayer and occupation with the word of God. "Where is Christ's Church, if it is not with us? Faith alone is required. I will rather fall with Christ than stand with Cæsar." Luther reprimanded Melancthon sharply for his pusillanimity, and some of his letters to him are addressed—"To Master Philip Kleinmuth" (pusillanimous.)

After many tergiversations, the Prot-

estants obtained their just demand; the confession, drawn up by Melancthon and approved by Luther, was read in public sitting on the 25th June, 1530. A great day, worthy of the most glorious days of the apostolic times. Luther was not present; he was dead as a public man. But he lived in God, and for his faith and country. Nothing could damp his spirits. "I also have my diet," he said; "and what lively discussions!" —referring playfully to the rooks which swarmed round his tower.

The emperor ordered the confession to be read in Latin. "No," said the elector; "we are Germans, and on German ground. I hope, therefore, your majesty will allow us to speak German." The emperor gave way, recollecting for the nonce he was in Germany, and that the Germans had a language of their own, and the strange fancy of using it

even in theological affairs. When the chancellor of the elector had read the first part of that grand confession, which expounds the principles of the Reformation, and, in particular, the doctrine of justification by faith—"that faith which is not the mere knowledge of a historical fact, but that which believes not only the history, but also the effect of that history upon the mind,"—there was an indescribable effect visibly produced upon the assembly. The opponents felt that there was a reality before them which they had never imagined; and others said, such a profession of faith by such princes was a more effectual preaching than that which had been stopped. "Christ," exclaimed Jonas (Melancthon's companion,) "is in the diet, and he does not keep silence: the word of God is indeed not to be bound." And forth these words have gone through a world wider than that to

which the apostles preached. After a pause, the second part, the articles about the abuses of the Church of Rome, was read and heard with profound silence by them itred prelates of that church who were there assembled. As to the emperor, he slept during the whole of the reading, or seemed to sleep, like a tiger ready to espy the most convenient moment for leaping upon its prey. In the mean time, he calculated undoubtedly, what political capital he could make of the Protestants against the pope.

Luther addressed a letter to the cardinal elector of Mainz, demanding nothing but one article, but insisting upon that unconditionally—the liberty of preaching the gospel. “Neither emperor,” he says, “nor pope has the right of forcing any one to believe.” With Melancthon and the other friends he insisted upon their leaving Augs-



burg immediately. "Home—home—home!" he exclaimed. "Might it please God that I should be immolated at this council, as John Huss was at Constance!" All the sayings of Luther during this crisis are sublime and of a truly prophetic character. He foresaw that now every effort would be made at Augsburg to destroy the principles of the Reformation by a treacherous compromise and a false peace. "The diet," he said, "is a regular dramatic piece: first, there is the prologue, then the exposition, then the action,—now comes the catastrophe; but I think it will not be a tragic, but a comic end." And, indeed, so it turned out to be, tragical as it was. The first triumphant effect of the confession soon passed away; the new converts, particularly among the prelates, withdrew; the fanatical party doubled its efforts, and Charles gave way to it, and aided its

ends by all diplomatic artifices. Melancthon was caught. He entered into conferences in the vain hope they would lead to concord; he declared himself ready to maintain and obey the supreme authority of the pope, if he would, by an act of clemency, connive at, if not approve, some points which they could not change. During the treacherous conferences which now began, the emperor tried to intimidate the elector by threatening not to grant him the investiture, which the elector claimed, however, as his hereditary right as brother of his predecessor; and to frighten all the Protestant princes and the Protestant imperial city of Augsburg with measures of violence, by calling in the imperial troops, and keeping the gates closed. The landgrave escaped. This act caused dismay among the ranks of the catholics, for a war could not be risked at this moment. The Ro-

manists changed their tactics ; they conceded, or rather feigned to concede ; for meanwhile, the pope had declared solemnly that he would not give up those very points. The Protestants acknowledged the jurisdiction of the bishops and the supremacy of the pope. A cry of indignation rose among the princes, and, among all, among the brave citizens of Augsburg. "Rather die with Jesus Christ," they declared, "than conquer without Him the favor of the whole world."

At this critical moment Luther's indignation rose to a holy wrath, like that of the prophets of old. "I understand," said he to Melancthon, "that you have begun a marvelous work, namely to make Luther and the pope agree together ; but the pope will say that he will not, and Luther begs to be excused. Should you, however, after all, succeed in your affair, I will follow your exam-

ple, and make an agreement between Christ and Belial. Take care that you give not up the justification by faith; that is the heel of the seed of the woman to crush the serpent's head. Take care not to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the bishops; they will soon take all. In short, all your negotiations have no chance of success unless the pope will renounce papacy. Now, mind, if you mean to shut up that glorious eagle, the gospel, in a sack, as sure as Christ lives, Luther will come to deliver that eagle with might."

But Melancthon **was** changed: Luther's voice had lost its power over him. The extreme Protestant views maintained in a declaration which Zwingli had delivered to the emperor, disposed him to cling still more to Rome. All seemed for the moment lost; but Luther's faith had discerned the way in which God meant to save the Protestant cause

and had said,—“Christ lives; he who has vanquished the violence of our enemies, can also give us the power of breaking through their artifices.” The Romanists fortunately insisted upon four points,—celibacy, confession, the denial of the cup to the laity, and the retaining of private masses. This was too much: the conference separated. The Romanists now conceded the cup and the marriage of the priests; but they would not give up the private masses, nor the obligation of confession and penance for the remission of sin, and required an acknowledgment of the meritorious character of good works. Melancthon stood firm, on which the emperor and Clement played out their last card; an ecumenical council should be convened; but, in the mean time, the Protestants should conform to the doctrine and rites of the Catholic church. Charles accompanied this communica

tion with the most insulting threats against the Protestant princes, who declined to negotiate, and declared their resolution to abide by the *status quo* of Worms until the council should assemble. The emperor indeed went so far as to forbid the princes to quit Augsburg, but the elector was firm as a rock: his son left the town on the 12th of September. Melancthon had regained his courage and sagacity. When Luther heard what was taking place, he raised his voice from Coburg—"Depart! depart! even if it must be, with the curse of pope and emperor upon you. You have confessed Jesus Christ, you have offered peace, you have obeyed the emperor, you have supported insults of every kind, you have withstood blasphemies: now I will encourage you,—as one of the faithful members of Jesus Christ. He is making ready our enemies as victims for the

sacrifice; he will presently consume their pride and deliver his people. Yes, he will bring us safely out of Babylon and her burning walls." When the emperor saw that the elector was resolved on departing, he communicated to the five princes and the six towns (four more having joined since Nuremberg and Reutlingen,) a proposal for a recess, or definitive decree of the diet, —that six months should elapse to give time for an arrangement; and meantime, Protestants and Catholics should unite in a common attack upon the Anabaptists and those who denied the holy sacrament, the Zwinglians; but the Protestants alike withstood threats and flatteries; and the elector took his leave, as he had announced, on the 23d of September.

The author of this article cannot agree with the saying of the eloquent historian of the Reformation, that if the

glorification of man was the purpose and end of God's ways, and not God's glory alone, one must wish Luther had died at the Wartburg. We have seen that it was he who, in 1524, pacified Wittenberg and Saxony by his reappearance, and achieved wonders as a practical Reformer; and in 1525, attempted, as pacificator of Germany, what nobody but himself could and would have done. But whose was the never-shaken mind? Who among the German theologians and Reformers was the organ of God and of the German nation during the greater part of the momentous diet of Augsburg? Who else but the man in the solitary tower at Coburg! From this time forth, however, he had nothing left to do but to look the tragedy in the face, as a believer in God and his kingdom on earth, praying and preaching, and **finally** to die the death of a faithful and hopeful Christian saint



All the rest is patient, suffering martyrdom.

Some of the most powerful Romanist princes, the archbishop of Mayence at their head, assured the elector on his departure, that they would never join the emperor in adopting any violent measures against him, although the brother of the archbishop Joachim, elector of Brandenburg, had presumed to promise in their name that they would. Even Ferdinand said some civil words. But why? Simply because (as Charles could not refrain from saying in his wrath) the emperor was more than ever resolved to resort to arms. "Nothing but armaments will have any effect," he said. Indeed, he announced this as his resolution immediately to the pope, and requested him to summon all Christian princes to assist him. The Catholic league was signed on the 13th of October. The anti-reformatory move-

ment was begun in the town of Augsburg itself. The answer to this was the declaration of sixteen imperial towns, instead of six, that they would not grant any subsidies against the Turks so long as the affairs of Germany remained unsettled. The Zwinglian and Lutheran towns shook hands; and this was the expression of the real feeling of the whole German nation, only priests, pastors, and theologians excepted. The Protestant dignitaries declared that they rejected the imperial closing declaration, as the emperor had no right to command in matters of faith. Luther was the organ of the universal feeling of the German people, when he exclaimed, "Our enemies do not fill me with fear I, on the contrary, shall put them down in the strength of the Lord. My life shall be their executioner; my death their hell." Indeed, his work was accomplished for all countries and for al.

ages. The rest of his life was one long pang, although he did not live to see the most dreadful calamity,—the breaking out of the civil war of religion which began immediately after his death. He wrote an address to the German nation, warning them not to yield to Rome, and not to trust any negotiations; “for,” said he, “they know no argument but force. Be not deceived by their words about obedience to the church. The church is a poor erring sinner, without Christ; not the church, but Christ is the faith.” The cause of the Reformation made progress; the Protestant alliance, begun by the convention of Schmalkalden, gained new members; Denmark acceded, and Joachim II. became as staunch a defender of the faith of his mother as Joachim I. had been its violent enemy. As Luther had prophesied, the negotiations with the popish party in 1541, renewed at

Ratisbon, led to no result. The emperor, at the Diet of Spires in 1544, dared no longer refuse to the Protestants the equal right which they claimed. The Romish council opened at Trent in 1544, and its first proceeding was to read the pope's anathema against the Protestants.

It is in this latter period (from 1539 to 1543) that a secret letter of advice, drawn up by Melancthon, was given by Luther and his friends to the landgrave Philip in answer to his pressing request (sanctioned by the landgravine, who suffered from an incurable inward disorder) to deliver him from the sin of fornication, by allowing him to marry a lady of the landgravine's court. After the masterly discussion of this subject by Archdeacon Hare in his *Vindication of Luther*, republished (1855) from the notes to his *Mission of the Comforter*, it is not necessary, least of all to Eng

lish readers, to enter into details in order to prove the report of Bossuet to be a tissue of falsehoods and malignity. We limit, therefore, ourselves to stating the decisive facts. *First.* The error committed in this secret advice by the Reformers was a perfectly sincere one; it arose from an indistinct view of the applicability of the patriarchal ordinances and of the Mosaic law, which admits a second wife legally, as indeed Moses himself seems to have had two wives at the same time. Now, as the Reformers could not show an express abrogation of those ordinances and of this law, they were led into this sad mistake. *Secondly.* There was in their advice no worldly regard whatever, as to any benefits and advantages which might accrue to themselves, or to the cause of the Reformation. They knew that the landgrave had his whole heart in the cause of the Reformation, and

had often risked his life and states for it. *Thirdly.* When in 1540, Philip divulged the secret, contrary to his promise, they spoke out and confessed their mistake, and Melancthon was brought by his grief to the verge of the grave. *Fourthly.* When, in the course of the controversy, Bucer published, in 1541, his pamphlet in defence of polygamy (under the name of Hulderic Neobulus,) Luther pronounced his judgment upon the book and on the subject in the following solemn words:—"He who desires my judgment upon this book, let him hear. Thus says Dr. Martin Luther on the book of Neobulus: He who follows this rogue and book, and thereupon takes more than one wife, and means that this should be a matter of right, may the devil bless his bath in the bottom of hell. This, God be praised, I well know how to maintain. . . . Much less shall they

establish the law, that a man may separate himself from his wife rightfully, when she has not already separated herself by open adultery, which this rogue would also like to teach." We possess also the sketch of his intended full reply to Bucer's book; and there we find the following sentence:—"We have already shown in a number of books, that the law of Moses does not concern us, and that we are not to look to the examples in the history of the saints, much less of the kings, to their faith, and to God's commandments."

The dark side of this latter portion of Luther's life is his controversy with the Reformed. He seemed now and then inclined to yield to their entreaties for a union, as is shown by his letter of 1531 to Bucer of Strasburg; and he declared his sincere wish for a union to the landgrave in 1534. He does not think the work ought to be precipitated,

but he prays to live to see it take place. The concord of Wittemberg, begun by Bucer in 1536, which left it just possible to the Reformed not to see their view of the sacrament excluded, has his cordial sympathy. Finally, on the 17th February, 1537, he writes to the Burgomaster of Basel, James Meyer, in terms which excited among the Swiss the hope he would give up his exclusive views. But when Ecolampadius published the writings of Zwingli, after this great and holy man had died a patriot's death in the battle of Cappel, Luther became so incensed, that he wrote, in 1544, two years before his death, the most violent of all his sacramentary treatises,—*A Short Confession respecting the Lord's Supper.*

However, his last word on his death-bed, was one of peace. He is credibly reported to have said to Melancthon in the course of a dying conversation—



“Dear Philip, I confess to have gone too far in the affair of the sacrament.”

The year 1546 began with unmistakable indications that Charles was now ready to strike a decisive blow.

Luther had been suffering much during the last few years, and he felt his end to be near at hand. In the month of January, 1546, he undertook a journey to Eisleben in very inclement weather, in order to restore peace in the family of the counts of Mansfeld; he caught a violent cold; preached four times; and took all the time an active part in the work of conciliation. On the 17th of February he felt that his release was at hand; and at Eisleben, where he was born, he died, in faith and prayer, on the following day. Nothing can be more edifying than the scene presented by the last days of Luther, of which we have the most authentic and detailed accounts. When dying,

he collected his last strength and offered up the following prayer:—"Heavenly Father, eternal, merciful God, thou hast revealed to me thy dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: Him I have taught—Him I have confessed—Him I love as my Saviour and Redeemer, whom the wicked persecute, dishonor, and reprove. Take my poor soul up to thee!" Then two of his friends put to him the solemn question,—“Reverend Father, do you die in Christ and in the doctrine you have constantly preached?” He answered by an audible and joyful “yes;” and repeating the verse, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,” he expired peaceably, without a struggle, on the 18th of February, 1546, at four o’clock in the afternoon.

# SPIRITUAL PORTRAIT OF LUTHER.

BY THOMAS CARLYLE.

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LUTHER's birthplace was Eisleben in Saxony; he came into the world there on the 10th of November 1483. It was an accident that gave this honor to Eisleben. His parents, poor mine-laborers in a village of that region, named Mohra, had gone to the Eisleben Winter-Fair: in the tumult of this scene the Frau Luther was taken with travail, found refuge in some poor house there, and the boy she bore was named MARTIN LUTHER. Strange enough to reflect upon it. This poor Frau Luther, she had gone with her husband to make her small merchandisings; perhaps to

sell the lock of yarn she had been spinning, to buy the small winter-necessaries for her narrow hut or household; in the whole world, that day, there was not a more entirely unimportant-looking pair of people than this Miner and his Wife. And yet what were all Emperors, Popes and Potentates, in comparison? There was born here, once more, a Mighty Man; whose light was to flame as the beacon over long centuries and epochs of the world; the whole world and its history was waiting for this man. It is strange, it is great. It leads us back to another Birth-hour, in a still meaner environment, Eighteen Hundred years ago, — of which it is fit that we *say* nothing, that we think only in silence; for what words are there! The Age of Miracles past? The Age of Miracles is forever here!

I find it altogether suitable to Luther's function in this Earth, and doubt

less wisely ordered to that end by the Providence presiding over him and us and all things, that he was born poor, and brought up poor, one of the poorest of men. He had to beg, as the school-children in those times did ; singing for alms and bread, from door to door. Hardship, rigorous Necessity was the poor boy's companion ; no man nor no thing would put on a false face to flatter Martin Luther. Among things, not among the shows of things, had he to grow. A boy of rude figure, yet with weak health, with his large greedy soul, full of all faculty and sensibility, he suffered greatly. But it was his task to get acquainted with *realities*, and keep acquainted with them, at whatever cost : his task was to bring the whole world back to reality, for it had dwelt too long with semblance ! A youth nursed-up in wintry whirlwinds, in desolate darkness and diffi-

culty, that he may step forth at last from his stormy Scandinavia, strong as a true man, as a god: a Christian Odin, —a right Thor once more, with his thunder-hammer, to smite asunder ugly enough *Jötuns* and Giant-monsters!

Perhaps the turning incident of his life, we may fancy, was that death of his friend Alexis, by lightning, at the gate of Erfurt. Luther had struggled up through boyhood, better and worse; displaying, in spite of all hindrances, the largest intellect, eager to learn: his father judging doubtless that he might promote himself in the world, set him upon the study of Law. This was the path to rise; Luther, with little will in it either way, had consented; he was now nineteen years of age. Alexis and he had been to see the old Luther people at Mansfeld; were got back again near Erfurt, when a thunderstorm came on: the bolt struck Alexis, he fell dead at

Luther's feet. What is this Life of ours?—gone in a moment, burnt up like a scroll, into the blank Eternity! What are all earthly preferments, Chancellorships, Kingships? They lie shrunk together—there! The Earth has opened on them; in a moment they are not, and Eternity is. Luther, struck to the heart, determined to devote himself to God, and God's service alone. In spite of all dissuasions from his father and others, he became a Monk in the Augustine Convent at Erfurt.

This was probably the first light-point in the history of Luther, his purer will now first decisively uttering itself; but, for the present, it was still as one light-point in an element all of darkness. He says he was a pious monk, *ich bin ein frommer Mönch gewesen*; faithfully, vainfully struggling to work out the truth of this high act of his; but it was

to little purpose. His misery had not lessened; had rather, as it were, increased into infinitude. The drudgeries he had to do, as novice in his Convent, all sorts of slave-work, were not his grievance: the deep earnest soul of the man had fallen into all manner of black scruples, dubitations; he believed himself likely to die soon, and far worse than die. One hears with a new interest for poor Luther that, at this time, he lived in terror of the unspeakable misery; fancied that he was doomed to eternal reprobation. Was it not the humble sincere nature of the man? What was he, that he should be raised to Heaven! He that had known only misery, and mean slavery: the news was too blessed to be credible. It could not become clear to him how, by fasts, vigils, formalities and mass-work, a man's soul could be saved. He fell into the blackest wretchedness; had to



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wander staggering as on the verge of bottomless Despair.

It must have been a most blessed discovery, that of an old Latin Bible which he found in the Erfurt Library about this time. He had never seen the Book before. It taught him another lesson than that of fasts and vigils. A brother monk too, of pious experience, was helpful. Luther learned now that a man was saved not by singing masses, but by the infinite grace of God : a more credible hypothesis. He gradually got himself founded, as on the rock. No wonder he should venerate the Bible, which had brought this blessed help to him. He prized it as the Word of the Highest must be prized by such a man. He determined to hold by that ; as through life and to death he firmly did.

This then is his deliverance from darkness, his final triumph over darkness, what we call his conversion ; for

himself the most important of all epochs. That he should now grow daily in peace and clearness; that, unfolding now the great talents and virtues implanted in him, he should rise to importance in his Convent, in his country, and be found more and more useful in all honest business of life, is a natural result. He was sent on missions by his Augustine Order, as a man of talent and fidelity fit to do their business well: the Elector of Saxony, Friedrich, named the Wise, a truly wise and just prince, had cast his eye on him as a valuable person; made him Professor in his new University of Wittenberg, Preacher too at Wittenberg; in both which capacities, as in all duties he did, this Luther, in the peaceable sphere of common life, was gaining more and more esteem with all good men.

It was in his twenty-seventh year that he first saw Rome; being sent

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thither, as I said, on mission from his Convent. Pope Julius the Second, and what was going on at Rome, must have filled the mind of Luther with amazement. He had come as to the Sacred City, throne of God's Highpriest on Earth; and he found it—what we know! Many thoughts it must have given the man; many which we have no record of, which perhaps he did not himself know how to utter. This Rome, this scene of false priests, clothed not in the beauty of holiness, but in far other vesture, is *false*: but what is it to Luther? A mean man he, how shall he reform a world? That was far from his thoughts. An humble, solitary man, why should he at all meddle with the world? It was the task of quite higher men than he. His business was to guide his own footsteps wisely through the world. Let him do his own obscure duty in it well; the rest, horrible and

dismal as it looks, is in God's hand, not in his.

It is curious to reflect what might have been the issue, had Roman Popery happened to pass this Luther by ; to go on in its great wasteful orbit, and not come athwart his little path, and force him to assault it ! Conceivable enough that, in this case, he might have held his peace about the abuses of Rome ; left Providence, and God on high, to deal with them ! A modest quiet man ; not prompt he to attack irreverently persons in authority. His clear task, as I say, was to do his own duty ; to walk wisely in this world of confused wickedness, and save his own soul alive. But the Roman Highpriesthood did come athwart him : afar off at Wittenberg he, Luther, could not get lived in honesty for it ; he remonstrated, resisted, came to extremity ; was struck at, struck again, and so it came to wager

of battle between them ! This is worth attending to in Luther's history. Perhaps no man of so humble, peaceable a disposition ever filled the world with contention. We cannot but see that he would have loved privacy, quiet diligence in the shade ; that it was against his will he ever became a notoriety. Notoriety : what would that do for him ? The goal of his march through this world was the Infinite Heaven ; an indubitable goal for him : in a few years, he should either have attained that, or lost it forever ! We will say nothing at all, I think, of that sorrowfullest of theories, of its being some mean shop-keeper grudge, of the Augustine Monk against the Dominican, that first kindled the wrath of Luther, and produced the Protestant Reformation. We will say to the people who maintain it, if indeed any such exist now : Get first into the sphere of thought by which it

is so much as possible to judge of Luther, or of any man like Luther, otherwise than distractedly; we may then begin arguing with you.

The Monk Tetzel, sent out carelessly in the way of trade, by Leo Tenth,—who merely wanted to raise a little money, and for the rest seems to have been a Pagan rather than a Christian, so far as he was anything,—arrived at Wittenberg, and drove his scandalous trade there. Luther's flock bought Indulgences; in the confessional of his Church, people pleaded to him that they had already got their sins pardoned. Luther, if he would not be found wanting at his own post, a false sluggard and coward at the very centre of the little space of ground that was his own and no other man's, had to step forth against Indulgences, and declare aloud that *they* were a futility and sorrowful mockery, that no man's sins could be pardon-

ed by *them*. It was the beginning of the whole Reformation. We know how it went; forward from this first public challenge of Tetzels, on the last day of October, 1517, through remonstrance and argument;—spreading ever wider, rising ever higher; till it became unquenchable, and enveloped all the world. Luther's heart's desire was to have this grief and other griefs amended; his thought was still far other than that of introducing separation in the Church, or revolting against the Pope, Father of Christendom.—The elegant Pagan Pope cared little about this Monk and his doctrines; wished, however to have done with the noise of him: in a space of some three years, having tried various softer methods, he thought good to end it by *fire*. He dooms the Monk's writings to be burnt by the hangman, and his body to be sent bound to Rome, —probably for a similar purpose. It

was the way they had ended with Huss, with Jerome, the century before. A short argument, fire. Poor Huss: he came to that Constance Council with all imaginable promises and safe-conducts; an earnest, not rebellious kind of man: they laid him instantly in a stone dungeon "three feet wide, six feet high, seven feet long;" *burnt* the true voice of him out of this world; choked it in smoke and fire. That was *not* well done!

I, for one, pardon Luther for now altogether revolting against the Pope. The elegant Pagan, by this fire-decree of his, had kindled into noble just wrath the bravest heart then living in this world. The bravest, if also one of the humblest, peaceablest; it was now kindled. These words of mine, words of truth and soberness, aiming faithfully, as human inability would allow to promote God's truth on Earth, and



save men's souls, you, God's vicegerent on earth, answer them by the hangman and fire? You will burn me and them, for answer to the God's message they strove to bring you? *You* are not God's vicegerent; you are another's than his, I think! I take your Bull, as an em-parchmented Lie, and burn *it*. You will do what you see good next: this is what I do.—It was on the 10th of December 1520, three years after the beginning of the business, that Luther “with a great concourse of people,” took this indignant step of burning the Pope's fire-decree “at the Elster-Gate of Wittenberg.” Wittenberg looked on “with shoutings;” the whole world was looking on. The Pope should not have provoked that “shout!” It was the shout of the awakening of nations. The quiet German heart, modest, patient of much, had at length got more than it could bear. Formulism, Pagan Pop-

ism, and other Falsehood and corrupt Semblance had ruled long enough: and here once more was a man found who durst tell all men that God's world stood not on semblances but on realities; that Life was a truth, and not a lie!

At bottom, as was said above, we are to consider Luther as a Prophet Idol-breaker; a bringer-back of men to reality. It is the function of great men and teachers. Mahomet said, These idols of yours are wood; you put wax and oil on them, the flies stick on them, they are not God, I tell you, they are black wood! Luther said to the Pope, This thing of yours that you call a Pardon of Sins, it is a bit of rag-paper with ink. It is nothing else; it, and so much like it, is nothing else. God alone can pardon sins. Popeship, spiritual Fatherhood of God's Church, is that a vain semblance, of cloth and parchment? It is

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an awful fact. God's Church is not a semblance, Heaven and Hell are not semblances. I stand on this, since you drive me to it. Standing on this, I a poor German Monk am stronger than you all. I stand solitary, friendless, but on God's Truth; you with your tiaras, triple-hats, with your treasures and armories, thunders spiritual and temporal, stand on the Devil's Lie, and are not so strong!

The Diet of Worms, Luther's appearance there on the 17th of April, 1521, may be considered as the greatest scene in Modern European History; the point, indeed, from which the whole subsequent history of civilization takes its rise. After multiplied negotiations, disputations, it had come to this. The young Emperor Charles Fifth, with all the Princes of Germany, Papal nuncios, dignitaries spiritual and temporal, are assembled there: Luther is to appear

and answer for himself, whether he will recant or not. The world's pomp and power sits there on this hand: on that, stands up for God's Truth, one man, the poor miner Hans Luther's son. Friends had reminded him of Huss, advised him not to go; he would not be advised. A large company of friends rode out to meet him, with still more earnest warnings; he answered, "Were there as many Devils in Worms as there are roof-tiles, I would on." The people, on the morrow, as he went to the Hall of the Diet, crowded the windows and housetops, some of them calling out to him, in solemn words, not to recant: "Whosoever denieth me before men!" they cried to him,—as in a kind of solemn petition and adjuration. Was it not in reality our petition too, the petition of the whole world, lying in dark bondage of soul, paralysed under a black spectral Nightmare and triple

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hatted Chimera, calling itself Father in God, and what not: "Free us; it rests with thee; desert us not!" Luther did not desert us. His speech, of two hours, distinguished itself by its respectful, wise and honest tone; submissive to whatsoever could lawfully claim submission, not submissive to any more than that. His writings, he said, were partly his own, partly derived from the Word of God. As to what was his own, human infirmity entered into it; unguarded anger, blindness, many things doubtless which it were a blessing for him could he abolish altogether. But as to what stood on sound truth and the Word of God, he could not recant it. How could he? "Confute me," he concluded, "by proofs of Scripture, or else by plain just arguments: I cannot recant otherwise. For it is neither safe nor prudent to do aught against conscience. Here stand I; I can do no

other: God assist me!"—It is, as we say, the greatest moment in the Modern History of Men. English Puritanism, England and its Parliaments, Americas, and vast work these two centuries; French Revolution, Europe and its work everywhere at present: the germ of it all lay there: had Luther in that moment done other, it had all been otherwise! The European World was asking him: Am I to sink ever lower into falsehood, stagnant putrescence, loathsome accursed death; or, with whatever paroxysm, to cast the falsehoods out of me, and be cured and live?

Great wars, contentions and disunion followed out of this Reformation; which last down to our day, and are yet far from ended. Great talk and crimination has been made about these. They are lamentable, undeniable; but afte

all, what has Luther or his cause to do with them? It seems strange reasoning to charge the Reformation with all this. When Hercules turned the purifying river into King Augeas's stables, I have no doubt the confusion that resulted was considerable all around: but I think it was not Hercules's blame; it was some other's blame! The Reformation might bring what results it liked when it came, but the Reformation simply could not help coming. To all Popes and Popes's advocates, expostulating, lamenting and accusing, the answer of the world is: Once for all, your Popehood has become untrue. No matter how good it was, how good you say it is, we cannot believe it; the light of our whole mind, given us to walk by from Heaven above, finds it henceforth a thing unbelievable. We will not believe it, we will not try to believe it,—we dare not! The thing is *untrue*;

we were traitors against the Giver of all Truth, if we durst pretend to think it true. Away with it; let whatsoever likes come in the place of it; with *it* we can have no farther trade! Luther and his Protestantism is not responsible for wars; the false Simulacra that forced him to protest, they are responsible. Luther did what every man that God has made has not only the right, but lies under the sacred duty to do: answered a Falsehood when it questioned him, Dost thou believe me?—No!—At what cost soever, without counting of costs, this thing behoved to be done. Union, organization spiritual and material, a far nobler than any Popedom or Feudalism in their truest days, I never doubt, is coming for the world; sure to come. But on Fact alone, not on Semblance and Simulacrum, will it be able either to come, or to stand when come. With union ground

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ed on falsehood, and ordering us to speak and act lies, we will not have anything to do. Peace? A brutal lethargy is peaceable, the noisome grave is peaceable. We hope for a living peace, not a dead one!

And yet, in prizing justly the indispensable blessings of the New, let us not be unjust to the Old. The Old *was* true, if it no longer is. In Dante's days it needed no sophistry, self-blinding or other dishonesty, to get itself reckoned true. It was good then; nay there is in the soul of it a deathless good. The cry of "No Popery," is foolish enough in these days. The speculation that Popery is on the increase, building new chapels, and so forth, may pass for one of the idlest ever started. Very curious: to count up a few Popish chapels, listen to a few Protestant logic-choppings,—to much dull-droning drowsy inanity that still calls itself Protestant,

and say: Sec, Protestantism is *dead*; Popism is more alive than it, will be alive after it!—Drowsy inanities, not a few, that call themselves Protestant are dead; but *Protestantism* has not died yet, that I hear of! Protestantism, if we will look, has in these days produced its Goethe, its Napoleon; German Literature and the French Revolution; rather considerable signs of life! Nay, at bottom, what else is alive *but* Protestantism? The life of most else that one meets is a galvanic one merely—not a pleasant, not a lasting sort of life!

Popery can build new chapels; welcome to do so, to all lengths. Popery cannot come back, any more than Paganism can,—*which* also still lingers in some countries. But, indeed, it is with these things, as with the ebbing of the sea: you look at the waves oscillating hither, thither on the beach; for *min-*

utes you cannot tell how it is going; look in half an hour where it is,—look in half a century where your Popehood is! Alas, would there were no greater danger to our Europe than the poor old Pope's revival! Thor may as soon try to revive.—And withal this oscillation has a meaning. The poor old Popehood will not die away entirely, as Thor has done, for some time yet; nor ought it. We may say, the Old never dies till this happen, till all the soul of good that was in it have got itself transfused into the practical New. While a good work remains capable of being done by the Romish form; or, what is inclusive of all, while a *pious life* remains capable of being led by it, just so long, if we consider, will this or the other human soul adopt it, go about as a living witness of it. So long it will obtrude itself on the eye of us who reject it, till we in our practice too have appro-

priated whatsoever of truth was in it. Then, but also not till then, it will have no charm more for any man. It lasts here for a purpose. Let it last as long as it can.

Of Luther I will add now, in reference to all these wars and bloodshed, the noticeable fact that none of them began so long as he continued living. The controversy did not get to fighting so long as he was there. To me it is proof of his greatness in all senses, this fact. How seldom do we find a man that has stirred up some vast commotion, who does not himself perish, swept away in it! Such is the usual course of revolutionists. Luther continued, in a good degree, sovereign of this greatest revolution; all Protestants, of what rank or function soever, looking much to him for guidance: and he held it peaceable, continued firm at the centre

of it. A man to do this must have a kingly faculty: he must have the gift to discern at all turns where the true heart of the matter lies, and to plant himself courageously on that, as a strong true man, that other true men may rally round him there. He will not continue leader of men otherwise. Luther's clear deep force of judgment, his force of all sorts, of *silence*, of tolerance and moderation, among others, are very notable in these circumstances.

Tolerance, I say; a very genuine kind of tolerance: he distinguishes what is essential and what is not; the unessential may go very much as it will. A complaint comes to him that such and such a Reformed Preacher "will not preach without a cassock." Well, answers Luther, what harm will a cassock do the man? "Let him have a cassock to preach in; let him have three cassocks if he find benefit in them!" His

conduct in the matter of Carlstadt's wild image-breaking; of the Anabaptists; of the Peasants' War, shows a noble strength, very different from spasmodic violence. With sure prompt insight he discriminates what is what: a strong just man, he speaks forth what is the wise course, and all men follow him in that. Luther's Written Works give similar testimony of him. The dialect of these speculations is now grown obsolete for us; but one still reads them with a singular attraction. And indeed the mere grammatical diction is still legible enough; Luther's merit in literary history is of the greatest: his dialect became the language of all writing. They are not well written, these Four-and-twenty Quartos of his; written hastily, with quite other than literary objects. But in no Books have I found more robust, genuine, I will say noble faculty of a man than in these. A

rugged honesty, homeliness, simplicity; a rugged sterling sense and strength. He flashes out illumination from him; his smiting idiomatic phrases seem to cleave into the very secret of the matter. Good humor too, nay tender affection, nobleness, and depth: this man could have been a Poet too! He had to *work* an Epic Poem, not write one. I call him a great Thinker; as indeed his greatness of heart already betokens that.

Richter says of Luther's words, "his words are half battles." They may be called so. The essential quality of him was, that he could fight and conquer; that he was a right piece of human Valor. No more valiant man, no mortal heart to be called *braver*, that one has record of, ever lived in that Teutonic Kindred, whose character is valor. His defiance of the "Devils" in Worms was not a mere boast, as the like might

be if now spoken. It was a faith of Luther's that there were Devils, spiritual denizens of the Pit, continually besetting men. Many times, in his writings, this turns up; and a most small sneer has been grounded on it by some. In the room of the Wartburg where he sat translating the Bible, they still show you a black spot on the wall; the strange memorial of one of these conflicts. Luther sat translating one of the Psalms; he was worn down with long labor, with sickness, abstinence from food: there rose before him some hideous indefinable Image, which he took for the Evil One, to forbid his work: Luther started up, with fiend-defiance; flung his inkstand at the spectre, and it disappeared! The spot still remains there; a curious monument of several things. Any apothecary's apprentice can now tell us what we are to think of this apparition, in a scientific sense: but the



man's heart that dare rise defiant, face to face, against Hell itself, can give no higher proof of fearlessness. The thing he will quail before, exists not on this Earth or under it.—Fearless enough! “The Devil is aware,” writes he on one occasion, “that this does not proceed out of fear in me. I have seen and defied innumerable Devils. Duke George,” of Leipzig, a great enemy of his, “Duke George is not equal to one Devil,”—far short of a Devil! “If I had business at Leipzig, I would ride into Leipzig, though it rained Duke Georges for nine days running.” What a reservoir of Dukes to ride into!

At the same time, they err greatly who imagine that this man's courage was ferocity, mere coarse disobedient obstinacy and savagery, as many do. Far from that. There may be an absence of fear which arises from the absence of thought or affection, from the

presence of hatred and stupid fury. We do not value the courage of the tiger highly! With Luther it was far otherwise; no accusation could be more unjust than this of mere ferocious violence brought against him. A most gentle heart withal, full of pity and love, as indeed the truly valiant heart ever is. The tiger before a *stronger* foe—flies: the tiger is not what we call valiant, only fierce and cruel. I know few things more touching than those soft breathings of affection, soft as a child's or a mother's, in this great wild heart of Luther. So honest, unadulterated with any cant; homely, rude in their utterance; pure as water welling from the rock. What, in fact, was *all* that downpressed mood of despair and reprobation, which we saw in his youth, but the outcome of preëminent thoughtful gentleness, affections too keen and fine? It is the course such men as

the poor Poet Cowper fall into. Luther to a slight observer, might have seemed a timid, weak man; modesty, affectionate shrinking tenderness the chief distinction of him. It is a noble valor which is roused in a heart like this, once stirred up into defiance, all kindled into a heavenly blaze.

In Luther's *Table-Talk*, a posthumous Book of anecdotes and sayings collected by his friends, the most interesting now of all the Books proceeding from him, we have many beautiful unconscious displays of the man, and what sort of nature he had. His behavior at the deathbed of his little Daughter, so still, so great and loving, is among the most affecting things. He is resigned that his little Magdalene should die, yet longs inexpressibly that she might live; —follows in awe-struck thought, the flight of her little soul through those unknown realms. Awestruck; most

heartfelt, we can see; and sincere,—for after all dogmatic creeds and articles, he feels what nothing it is that we know, or can know: His little Magdalene shall be with God, as God wills; for Luther too that is all; *Islam* is all.

Once, he looks out from his solitary Patmos, the Castle of Coburg, in the middle of the night: The great vault of Immensity, long flights of clouds sailing through it,—dumb, gaunt, huge:—who supports all that? “None ever saw the pillars of it; yet it is supported.” God supports it. We must know that God is great, that God is good; and trust, where we cannot see.—Returning home from Leipzig once, he is struck by the beauty of the harvest-fields: How it stands, that golden yellow corn, on its fair taper stem, its golden head bent, all rich and waving there,—the meek Earth, at God’s kind bidding, has produced it once again; the bread of man!

In the garden at Wittenberg one evening at sunset, a little bird has perched for the night: That little bird, says Luther, above it are the stars and deep Heaven of worlds; yet it has folded its little wings; gone trustfully to rest there as in its home: the Maker of it has given it too a home!—Neither are mirthful turns wanting: there is a great free human heart in this man. The common speech of him has a rugged, nobleness, idiomatic, expressive, genuine; gleams here and there with beautiful poetic tints. One feels him to be a great brother man. His love of Music, indeed, is not this, as it were, the summary of all these affections in him? Many a wild unutterability he spoke forth from him in the tones of his flute. The Devils fled from his flute, he says. Death-defiance on the one hand, and such love of music on the other; I could call these the two opposite poles of a

great soul ; between these two all great things had room.

Luther's face is to me expressive of him ; in Kranach's best portraits I find the true Luther. A rude, plebeian face ; with its huge crag-like brows and bones, the emblem of rugged energy ; at first, almost a repulsive face. Yet in the eyes especially there is a wild silent sorrow ; an unnamable melancholy, the element of all gentle and fine affections ; giving to the rest the true stamp of nobleness. Laughter was in this Luther, as we said ; but tears also were there. Tears also were appointed him ; tears and hard toil. The basis of his life was Sadness, Earnestness. In his latter days, after all triumphs and victories, he expresses himself heartily weary of living ; he considers that God alone can and will regulate the course things are taking, and that perhaps the Day of Judgment is not far. As for him, he longs

for one thing: that God would release him from his labor, and let him depart and be at rest. They understand little of the man who cite this in *discredit* of him!—I will call this Luther a true Great Man; great in intellect, in courage, affection and integrity; one of our most lovable and precious men. Great, not as a hewn obelisk; but as an Alpine mountain,—so simple, honest, spontaneous, not setting up to be great at all; there for quite another purpose than being great! Ah yes, unsubduable granite, piercing far and wide into the Heavens; yet in the clefts of it fountains, green beautiful valleys with flowers! A right Spiritual Hero and Prophet; once more, a true Son of Nature and Fact, for whom these centuries, and many that are to come yet, will be thankful to Heaven.





## APPENDIX.

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### REVERSE-SIDE OF THE PICTURE.

By SIR WM. HAMILTON.<sup>1</sup>

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THE following *hasty* anthology of some of Luther's opinions, and, in his own words, literally translated, may render it doubtful, whether the heresies of his followers are to be traced no higher than to the relaxation, (not a century old,) of religious tests. We must not, however, set down Luther for a rationalist, howbeit the rationalists may adduce Luther's practice as the precedent of their own. For, while far from erring through any overween

<sup>1</sup> *Discussions on Philosophy and Literature. Education and University Reform*, second London edition, p. 505, *et sequens*.

ing reliance on the powers of human reason in general, still Luther was betrayed into corresponding extravagancies by an assurance of *his personal inspiration*, of which he was, indeed, no less confident than of his *ability to perform miracles*. He disclaimed the Pope, he spurned the Church, but varying in almost all else, he never doubted of his own *infallibility*. He thus piously regarded himself as the authoritative judge, both of the meaning, and of the authenticity of Scripture. Yet though it is our duty, in refuting an untenable hypothesis, to allege various untenable and even obnoxious opinions of the great reformer; so far from entertaining any dislike of Luther, we admire him, with all his aberrations, (for he never paltered with the truth,) not only as one of the ablest, but as one of the best of men. Only, in renouncing, with Luther, the Pope, we are cer-

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tainly not willing to make a Pope of Luther.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In stating the truth regarding Luther, I should regret to be thought by any, to utter aught in disparagement of Protestantism. Protestantism is not the doctrine of this or that individual Protestant; and with reference even to the man Luther, I am sorry that it is here incumbent on me, to notice his faults without dwelling on his virtues. That what is now to be alleged, should not long ago have been familiar to all, only shows that Church History has not yet been written, as alone written it ought to be,—with *truth and knowledge*. Church History falsely written, is a school of vain glory, hatred, and uncharitableness; truly written, it is a discipline of humility, of charity, of mutual love. Written in a veracious and unsectarian spirit, every religious community is herein taught, that it has cause enough to blush for its adherents,

“*Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra;*”

and that others, though none be perfect, are all entitled to respect, as all reflections, though partial reflections, of the truth. Ecclesiastical History, indeed, may and ought to be the one

I. SPECULATIVE THEOLOGY. — “God pleaseth you when he crowns the unworthy; he ought not to displease you when he damns the innocent.” [Jena Latin, iii. f. 207.]—“All things take place by the eternal and invariable will of God, who [which] blasts and shatters in pieces the freedom of the human will.” [F. 165.]—“God creates in us the evil, in like manner as the good. [Ff. 170, 216.]—“The high perfection of faith,<sup>8</sup> is to believe that God is just,

best, as the one unexclusive, application of religious principle to practice,—at once Catholic and Protestant and Christian; vindicating to the Church at large its inheritance of authority; manifesting the fallibility of all human agents, nor substituting merely one papacy for another; whilst yielding “Christ the truth,” as its last and dominant result.

<sup>8</sup> *Assurance*, Personal Assurance, Special Faith, (*the feeling of certainty* that God is propitious to *me*,—that *my* sins are forgiven, Fides, Plerophoria Fidei, Fides Specialis,) — As

notwithstanding that, by his will he

assurance was long universally held in the Protestant communities to be the criterion and condition of a true or *saving Faith*. Luther declares, that, "he who hath not Assurance spews Faith out;" and Melancthon, that "Assurance is the discriminating line of Christianity from Heathenism." Assurance is, indeed, the punctum saliens of Luther's system; and an unacquaintance with this, his great central doctrine, is one prime cause of the chronic misrepresentation which runs through our recent histories of Luther and the Reformation. Assurance is no less strenuously maintained by Calvin; is held even by Arminius; and stands, essentially, part and parcel of all the Confessions of all the Churches of the Reformation, down to the Westminster Assembly. In that Synod Assurance was, in Protestantism, for the *first*, indeed *only*, time formally declared "*not to be of the essence of Faith*;" and accordingly, the Scottish General Assembly has, subsequently, once and again, condemned and deposed the holders of this, the doctrine of Luther, of Calvin, of all the other Churches of the Reformation, and of the older Scottish Church itself.

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renders us necessarily damnable, and

In the English, and, more articulately, in the Irish Establishment, Assurance still stands a necessary tenet of ecclesiastical belief. (See *Homilies*, Book I., Number iii., Part 3, specially referred to in the Eleventh of the *Thirty-nine Articles*, and Number iv., Parts 1 and 3; likewise the Sixth *Lambeth Article*.) Assurance was consequently held by all the older Anglican Churchmen, of whom Hooker may stand for the example: but Assurance is now openly disavowed, without scruple, by Anglican Churchmen high and low, when apprehended; but of these, many, like Mr. Hare, are blissfully incognisant of the opinion, its import, its history, and even its name.

This dogma, with its fortune, past and present, affords indeed a series of the most *curious contrasts*.—For it is curious, that this cardinal point of Luther's doctrine should, without exception, have been constituted into the fundamental principle of all the Churches of the Reformation, and as their common and uncatholic doctrine, have been explicitly condemned at Trent.—Again, it is curious, that this common and differential doctrine of the Churches of the

seemeth to find pleasure in the torments

Reformation, should now be abandoned virtually in, or formally by, all these Churches themselves.—Again, it is curious, that Protestants should now generally profess the counter doctrine, asserted at Trent in condemnation of their peculiar principle.—Again, it is curious that this most important *variation* in the faith of Protestants, as, in fact, a gravitation of Protestantism back towards Catholicity, should have been overlooked, as indeed in his days undeveloped, by the keen-eyed author of “The History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches.”—Finally, it is curious, that, though now fully developed, this central approximation of Protestantism to Catholicity should not, as far as I know, have been signalized by any theologian, Protestant or Catholic; whilst the Protestant symbol, (*Fides sola justificat—Faith alone justifies,*) though now eviscerated of its real import, and now only manifesting an unimportant difference of expression, is still supposed to mark the discrimination of the two religious denominations. For both agree, that the three heavenly virtues must *all* concur to salvation; and they only differ, whether Faith, *as a word*,

of the miserable." [F. 171.) All from the treatise *De Servo Arbitrio*.]

II.) PRACTICAL THEOLOGY.<sup>4</sup>—"We,"

does or does not involve Hope and Charity. This misprision would have been avoided had Luther and Calvin only said—*Fiducia sola justificat*—*Assurance alone justifies*; for on their doctrine Assurance was convertible with true Faith, and true Faith implied the other Christian graces. But this primary and peculiar doctrine of the Reformation is now harmoniously condemned by Catholics and Protestants in unison.

<sup>4</sup> In a moral relation, perhaps, more than in any other, the history of Luther and the Reformation has been written, only as a conventional romance; and I know not, whether Catholics or Protestants have wandered the widest from the line of truth. Of the following general facts I hold *superfluous* proof.

1<sup>o</sup>, After the religious revolution in Protestant Germany, there began and long prevailed a fearful dissolution of morals. The burthen of Luther's lamentation is: "Under the Papacy, we were bad, but under the Gospel, we are seven—yea more than seven times worse;"—a



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(Martin Luther Philippus, *Melancthon*

contrast which he usually signalises by the parable of the "one unclean spirit returning and taking with him seven other spirits, each more wicked than himself."

20, Of this moral corruption there were two principal foci,—Wittenberg and Hesse.—Shortly before his death, Luther abandoning, calls Wittenberg "a Sodom;" and not long after it, Wittenberg is formally branded by Simon Musæus, the Professor of Theology and Superintendent of Jena, another Protestant, another German, another Saxon University, as "*fœtida cloaca Diaboli*."—Touching Hesse, the celebrated Walther writing to Bullinger, before the middle of the century, says of its centre of learning and religious education:—"In Marburg the rule of morals is such, as Bacchus would prescribe to his Mænads, and Venus to her Cupids;" while from Marburg and the chief chair of Theology in that University, (what is unknown to his biographers,) the immorality of the natives had previously determined, as he writes, the pious Lambert of Avignon to fly, his flight being, however, arrested by his sudden death.

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Martin *Bucer*, Dionysius *Melander*,

3º, The cause of this demoralization is not to be sought for in the religious revolution itself; for in Switzerland and other countries the religious revolution resulted in an increased sobriety and continence. In Protestant Germany, and particularly in Saxony, we need look no farther than to the moral doctrine of the divines;

“Hoc fonte derivata clades

In patriam populumque fluxit:”

but in Hesse, beside that influence, we must take into account the pattern of manners set to his subjects by the prince;

“Regis ad exemplum totus componitur orbis.”

4º, As to Polygamy in particular, which not only Luther, Melancthon, and Bucer, the three leaders of the German Reformation, speculatively adopted,—but to which above a dozen distinguished divines among the Reformers stood formally committed; there were two principal causes which disinclined the theologians to a practical application of the theory.—The first of these, which operated more especially on Luther and Melancthon, was the opposition it was sure of encountering from the

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*John Lening, Antonius Corvinus,*

Princes of both branches of the house of Saxony.—The second, that the doctrine itself was taken up and carried out to every extreme by odious sects and odious divines; in a word, it had become fly-blown. The Sacramentarian Carlstadt's public adoption of it, tended principally to disgust Luther, and in a less degree Melancthon; for Carlstadt's doctrines were, in the mass, an abomination to these two reformers: but the polygamist excesses of the hated Anabaptists, in the last season of their reign in Munster, revolted all rational minds; and, as I said, (what Mr. Hare strangely misunderstands,) homœopathically broke the force of the epidemic throughout Germany and Europe.

Specially: the Landgrave's bigamy has been mistaken in its more essential circumstances, from a want of the requisite information, both by Protestant and Catholic writers; and by none almost more than by the recent editor of the *Corpus Reformatorum*, Dr. Bretschneider. Touching this transaction, I shall now state in general a few of the more necessary facts; of which, however startling, I have irrecusable proof,—proof which, before long, I may fully

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Adam Kraft, of Fulda, Justus Winther,

detail, as indeed I ought ere this perhaps to have done.

The sanction of Luther and Melancthon to the Landgrave's second marriage was compelled. Prudentially, and for special reasons which I shall not now enumerate, they were strongly averse from this proceeding, on the part of that Prince; but *on principle*, they, unfortunately could not oppose it. They had both promulgated opinions in favor of polygamy, to the extent of vindicating *to the spiritual minister a right of private dispensation*, and *to the temporal magistrate the right of establishing the practice*, if he chose, *by public law*. They had even tendered (what is unknown, though the consultation has been published for centuries, to all English historians,)—tendered their counsel to Henry VIII., advising him, in his own case, to a plurality of wives. Without, however, showing at present how the screw was actually applied, I may notice generally that their acquiescence was extorted, through Martin Bucer, a reformer and man of genius only inferior to themselves; whilst the proceeding of the Landgrave was zealously encouraged,

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Balthasar *Raida*,)<sup>5</sup>—"we cannot advise

and the scruples of the second Landgravine effectually overcome, by the two court preachers, the two courtly chaplains, Dionysius Melander and John Lening; Melander and Lening being also the Pastors of the two parishes where lay the princely residences of Cassel and Melsingen, therefore were they, in all respects, the appropriate spiritual advisers of their territorial lord. Thus these three divines, apart from the Prince, were the prime movers in this scandalous affair; and in contrast to them, Luther and Melancthon certainly show in favorable relief.

Bucer (Butzer, Putzer, Felinus,)—"Cat by name, and Cat by nature," the lesser Martin

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<sup>5</sup> The list of the divines who concurred in the landgrave's bigamy is here given more fully and accurately (though without the synonymes) than in any other relative publication,—and of such I am now acquainted, I believe, with *all*. The consilium was drawn up by Luther and Melancthon at Wittemberg, 19th December, 1539. It was then signed by Bucer; and afterwards in Hesse, by the other six divines, who were all subjects of the Landgrave.

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that the license of marrying more wives

had previously merited from Luther the character of "*lying varlet*;" and he consistently displays himself in the sequel of this business as guilty of MENDACITY in every possible degree. To those, however, acquainted with the *real* history of the Reformation, Bucer is known, with much ability and many amiable qualities, as, in fact, the âme damnée of that revolution. But he was not, at least, a simultaneous polygamist, as asserted by some Catholic historians.

Dionysius Melander (Schwartz) did not belie either his name or his surname. Though an eloquent preacher, and "the Reformer of Frankfort," yet was he as worthy a minister of *Bacchus*, as an unworthy minister of Christ; professing as he did, "*that he lived and wished to live only for the taste of wine.*" Neither shall we marvel how a Protestant Bishop, Superintendent, Inspector, like Melander, could bestow the spiritual benediction on his master's bigamy; when aware of the still higher marvel, that Melander the Inspector, Superintendent, Protestant Metropolitan of Hesse, was (the moral *negro*!) at and before the time, himself a TRISAMIST, that is, to avoid all possible ambiguity

than one be publicly introduced, and,

*the husband of three wives at once.* The Prince thus followed at a distance, not only the precept, but the example of the Pastor.

John, or, as the reverend divine was very irreverently called, *Leno* Lenning, seems, with both learning and ability, to have been a Pandarus and Caliban in one; so that the epithets of "monster," &c., applied to him by Luther and Melancthon, suited indifferently his deformities moral and physical. The Pastor of Melsingen was, as Melancthon informs us, like his Prince, a SYPHILITIC saint, (nor touching either Prince or Pastor, do I found on any testimony, hitherto adduced, on any testimony, euphemistic or ambiguous); and this worthy undertook the congenial task of converting Margaret von der Sahl to the new faith of Polygamy. The precious book, indeed, which, for the purpose he composed and sanctimoniously addressed to that "virtuous Lady and beloved sister in Christ," is still extant. If an adulterer, Lenning does not appear, like his fellow-laborer Melander, to have been, in practice at least, a simultaneous polygamist; but when left a veteran widower, of more than seventy, "the Carthu-

as it were ratified by law." (Such legislation, in fact, no dependent Prince—no feudatory of the Empire was warranted to authorize.) "If anything were allowed to get into print on this head, your Highness," (Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, champion of the Reformation, who, having lost, as he pleads, conceit of his wife, being touched with scruples of conscience at his adultery, but which he [*thrice*] admits that "*he does not wish to abstain from,*" and "knowing," as he tells themselves, "of Luther and Melancthon having exhorted the King of England not to divorce

sian monster" incontinently married a nursery girl, Barbara Biedenkapp, as I recollect by name, from the household of his pervert, "the left Landgravine," and keeper of her eighth child.

With such precept and such example, we shall not be surprised, that the Hessian morals became soon notoriously the most corrupt in Germany, I ought, perhaps, to say, in Christendom.



his first queen, but to marry a second over and above,"—had applied to the leading doctors of the Reformation for their spiritual sanction to take another wife,)—"your Highness easily comprehends that it would be understood and received as a precept, whence much scandal and many difficulties would arise. . . . . Your Highness should be pleased to consider the excessive scandal; that the enemies of the Gospel would exclaim, that we, like the Anabaptists, have adopted the practice of polygamy, that the Evangelicals, as the Turks, allow themselves the indulgence of a plurality of wives. . . . But in certain cases there is room for *Dispensation*. If any one (for example) detained captive in a foreign country, should there take unto himself a second wife for the good of his body and health . . . in these cases, *we know not* by what reason a man could be condemned, who

marries an additional wife, with the advice of his Pastor, not for the purpose of introducing a new law, but of satisfying his own necessity. . . . In fine, if your Highness be fully and finally resolved to marry yet another wife; we judge, that this ought to be done *secretly*, as has been said above, in speaking of the Dispensation, so that it be known only to your Highness, to the Lady, and to a few faithful persons obliged to silence, under the seal of confession; hence no attacks or scandal of any moment would ensue. For there is nothing unusual in princes keeping *concubines*; and although the lower orders may not perceive the excuses of the thing, the more intelligent know how to make allowance”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The nuptials were performed in presence of these witnesses,—*Melancthon, Bucer, Melander* [who officiated, *Raida*, who acted as Notary,] with others; and *privately*, in order, as the

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III.) BIBLICAL CRITICISM.—(i.) “The

marriage-contract bears, “to avoid scandal, seeing that, in modern times, it has been unusual to have two wives at once, although *in this case it be Christian and lawful*.”—The Landgrave marvelously contrived to live in harmony with both his wives, and had a large family by each. The date of the transaction is the end of 1539. The relative documents were published in 1679, by the Elector Palatine, Charles Lewis, and are said to have converted, among others, a descendant of Philip Prince Ernest of Hesse, to the Catholic Church. It has, in fact, been stated by (now recovered) historians, that the doctrine of Luther touching marriage, and the practice of the Landgrave, were the obstacles which prevented the Emperor Ferdinand I. from declaring for the Reformation; and some distinguished converts have openly ascribed their desertion of Protestantism to the same cause. A corresponding opinion of Dr. Henke, late Primarius Professor of Theology in Helmstadt, would have figured, had he known it, with admirable effect, in Mr. Pearson’s catalogue of modern Teutonic heresies. “Monogamy,” (says that celebrated divine,) “and the

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books of the **KINGS** are more worthy of

prohibition of extra matrimonial connections, are to be viewed as the remnants of monachism and of an uninquiring faith." However detestable this doctrine, the bold avowal of the rationalist is honorable, when contrasted with the skulking compromise of all professed principle, by men calling themselves—" *The Evangelicals*."—Renouncing the Pope, they arrogate the power of the keys to an extent never pretended to by any successor of St. Peter; and proclaiming themselves to the world for the Apostles of a purified faith, they can secretly, trembling only at discovery, authorize, in name of the Gospel, a dispensation of the moral law. Compared with Luther [?] or Cranmer, how respectable is the character of Knox.

Before 1843, I had become aware, that this last statement was incorrect; and in a supplemental note to a pamphlet published by me in that year, I made the following retraction:—  
"I do not found my statement of the general opinion of Luther and Melancthon in favor of polygamy, on their special allowance of a second wife to Philip the Magnanimous, or on any expressions contained in their Consilium on that

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credit than the Books of the CHRONICLES."

occasion. On the contrary, that Consilium, and the circumstances under which it was given, may be, indeed *always have been*, adduced to show, that in the case of the Landgrave they made a sacrifice of eternal principle to temporary expedience. The reverse of this I am able to prove, in a chronological series of testimonies by them to the religious legality of polygamy, as a general institution, consecutively downwards from their earliest commentaries on the Scriptures, [not as Mr. Hare perverts it (p. 840) "their commentaries on the earliest books of Scripture,"] and other purely abstract treatises. So far, therefore, was there from being any disgraceful compromise of principle in the sanction accorded by them to the bigamy of the Landgrave of Hesse, they only, in that case, carried their speculative doctrine (held, by the way, also by Milton,) into practice; although the prudence they had by that time acquired, rendered them, on worldly grounds, averse from their sanction being made publicly known. I am the more anxious to correct this general mistake touching the motives of these illustrious men, because I was myself, on a former occa-

[Colloquia, c. lix. § 6.](ii.) "The book of ESTHER, I toss into the Elbe."<sup>7</sup> [Ib.]—

sion, led to join in the injustice."—(Be not Schismatics, &c., p. 59, 3d. ed.)

<sup>7</sup> Soon after the publication of this article, I became aware, that *Esther* was here a mistake for *Esdras*; and this by the verse quoted. The error stands in all Aurifaber's editions of the Table Talk; his text is taken by Walch, and from Walch I translated. It is corrected, however, in the recensions by Stangwald and Selnecker, and, of course, in the new edition of the Colloquia by Bindseil. . . . As to my error; I may say in excuse, if excuse be needed, that at the time of writing the article, not only was I compelled to make the extracts without any leisure for deliberation; but I recollected, though the book was not at hand, that Luther, in his work on the Bondage of the Will, had declared that *Esther* ought to be extruded from the canon,—a judgment familiar to every tyro even in biblical criticism. His concluding words are:—"dignior omnibus, me iudice, qui extra Canonem haberetur." (Jena Latin, iii. 182.) Esther, I thus knew, was repudiated by Luther, and among his formulæ of dismissal the preced

[“And when the Doctor was correcting the second book of the Maccabees, he said:—] I am so an enemy to the book of *Esther*, that I would it did not exist; for it Judaizes too much, and hath in it a great deal of heathenish naughtiness. [Then said Magister Foerster,” (the great Hebrew Professor:)—“The Jews rate the book of Esther at more than any of the prophets; the prophets Daniel and Isaiah they absolutely contemn. Whereupon Dr. Martinus:—It is horrible that they, the Jews, should despise the noblest predictions of these two holy prophets; the one of whom teaches and preaches Christ in all richness and purity, whilst the other portrays and describes, in the most certain manner, monarchies and empires along with the kingdom of Christ.”—(iii.) “Job spake not, therefore, as it stands  
ing recommended itself as at once the most characteristic and the shortest.

written in his book, but hath had such cogitations. . . . It is a sheer argumentum fabulæ. . . . It is probable that Solomon made and wrote this book.” [Ib.]—(iv.) “So’ also have the PROVERBS OF SOLOMON been collected by others, [caught up from the king’s mouth, when he spake them at table or elsewhere: and those are well marked, wherein the royal majesty and wisdom shine conspicuous.”<sup>8</sup> (Ib.)]—(v.) “This book (ECCLESIASTES) ought to have been more full; there is too much of broken matter in it; it has neither boots nor spurs, but rides only in socks, as I myself

<sup>8</sup> This is illustrated by what Luther says in the Standing Preface on the Preacher of Solomon, which dates from 1524. “This book, also, of the *Proverbs of Solomon*, has been pieced together by others; and among his, have been inserted the doctrine and sayings of sundry wise men.—Item, the *Song of Solomon* appears, in like manner, as a pieced book, taken by others out of Solomon’s mouth.”



when in the cloister. . . . Solomon hath not therefore written this book, which hath been made in the days of the Maccabees by the Son of Sirach. It is like a Talmud compiled from many books, perhaps in Egypt, from the Library of King Ptolemy Euergetes.”<sup>9</sup> [Ib.]—(vi.) “ISAIAH hath borrowed his whole art and knowledge from DAVID out of the Psalter.”<sup>10</sup> [Ib. c. lx. § 10.]—(vii.)

<sup>9</sup> I now doubt not that Luther used the word *Ecclesiasticus*, which the reporter heard as *Ecclesiastes*, appending afterwards the translation of *The Preacher*; for the quotation is from the Table-Talk. I think no one will dispute this who compares, *inter alia*, Luther’s “Preface to the Book of Jesus Sirach,” to be found, as all the others, in Walch’s edition of his works. (xiv. 91.) The mistake has also, I see, escaped Dr. Bindseil, in his conclusion of Fœrstemann’s late elaborate, though by no means adequate, edition of the Colloquia.

<sup>10</sup> Luther also (Ib. § 23) says:—“Moses and David are the two highest prophets. What *Isaiah* hath, that he takes out of David, and

“The history of JONAH is so monstrous, that it is absolutely incredible.”<sup>11</sup> [Ib.]

the *other prophets* do in like manner.” This I presume to think inconsistent with a true doctrine of revelation. Inspiration borrowing!—Inspiration imitating! I did not however suppose that, reprehensible as might be the expression, Luther denied the prophetic gift of Isaiah.

<sup>11</sup> I quoted these words of Luther to show in how irreverent a manner he thought himself privileged to speak of the Holy Scriptures. . . . Melancthon had fallen ill at Weimar from contrition and fear for the part he had been led to take in the Landgrave’s polygamy; his life was even in danger. Luther came; and Melancthon is one of the *three* persons whom the Reformer afterwards boasts of having *raised miraculously from the dead*. . . “Allda (saget Lutherus) musste mir unser Herr Gott herhalten. Denn ich warf ihm den sack fuer die Thuere, und rieb ihm die Ohren mit allen promissionibus exaudendarum precum, die ich in der heilige Schrift zu erzahlen wusste, dass er mich musste erhœren, wo ich anders seinen verheissungen trauen sollte.” (May I indeed venture to translate

—(viii.) “That the *Epistle to the Hebrews* is not by Saint Paul; nor indeed by any apostle, is shown by chap. ii. 3. . . . It is by an excellently learned man, this?) “‘Then and there,’ said Luther, ‘I made our Lord God to smart for it. For I threw him down the sack before the door, and rubbed his ears with all his promises of hearing prayer which I knew how to recapitulate from Holy Writ, so that he could not but hearken to me, should I ever again place any reliance on his promises.’” . . . Luther believed, that *nothing could be refused to his earnest supplication*; and accordingly he declares, that it required only that *he should sincerely ask for the destruction of the world, to precipitate the advent of the last day*. This doctrine was carried to every its most absurd extreme by the other reformers; and even the trigamist prelate of Cassel, the wine-bibbing Melander, exhorted his clergy to pray for a plentiful hop-harvest, that, (as his son or grandson records,) though himself abominating beer, there might thus be a less demand for wine, and he, accordingly, allowed to indulge more cheaply in the juice of the grape.

a disciple of the Apostles. . . . It should be no stumbling-block, if there be found in it a mixture of wood, straw, hay." [Standing Preface in Luther's Version.](ix.) "The EPISTLE OF JAMES, I account the writing of no apostle." [Standing Preface.] "*St. James's Epistle* is truly an Epistle of straw [in contrast to them," ("the right and noblest books of the New Testament") "for it hath in it no evangelical character."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> In various of his works, and from an early to the latest period, Luther denied the canonicity of *St. James's Epistle*. To adduce only a few of his testimonies:—In 1519, in the seventh Thesis against Eck, he declares it "wholly inferior to the apostolic majesty;" and in the following year, in the Chapter on Sacraments, of his *Babylonish Captivity*, "unworthy of an apostolic spirit." In 1522, in a conclusion, afterwards omitted, of the Standing Preface, he excludes it "from the list of canonical books;" an exclusion, however, contained in the Standing Preface itself, in addition to the testimony quo-

{Fragmentary Preface to the New Testament, 1524.}]—(x.) “The EPISTLE OF JUDE is an abstract or copy of St. Peter’s second . . . . and allegeth sayings and stories which have no place in Scripture.” [Standing Preface, &c.]—(xi.) In the REVELATION OF JOHN much is wanting to let me deem it either prophetic or apostolical. . . . I can discover no trace that it is established by the Holy Spirit.” [Preface of 1522.]<sup>18</sup>

Παῦρα μὲν, ἀλλὰ μάλα λιγέως.

ted from it in the text. We find in the Church Postills, which were frequently republished, Luther asserting:—“This Epistle was written by no Apostle; no where indeed is it fully conformable to the true apostolic character and manner, and to pure doctrine.” (Walch, xii. 769.)—Finally, it is rejected, as in doctrine contradictory of St. Paul, in the Table-Talk. (C. lxix. § 4.)

<sup>18</sup> I have not deemed it necessary to quote anything in confirmation or supplement of the extracts from Luther, relative to the biblical books, except when Mr. Hare has hazarded his strictures. On *more than half* of my examples

of Luther's temerarius criticism, he has been silent. He has ventured no remark in regard to the books of—(i.) *Kings* and *Chronicles*, (iii.) *Job*, (v.) *Ecclesiastes*, (viii.) *Epistle to the Hebrews*, (x.) *Epistle of Jude*, (xi.) *Apocalypse*. The half of these likewise, be it remarked, are attacked by Luther, regularly and in writings formally expounding his last and most matured opinions. So that even if Mr. Hare had been as successful, as he is unfortunate, in his counter-criticism, — were, in fact, all the extracts expunged, in regard to which he has thought it possible to make a single objection; nevertheless my conclusion would still stand untouched,—that Luther, though personally no rationalist, affords a warrant to the most audacious of rationalistic assaults. For, as observed, he could not vindicate this license of judgment as a right peculiar to himself—as a right not common to all. Accordingly, the ultra-rationalist Wegscheider dedicates his *Institutiones Theologiæ* to the memory of Luther; and in what terms? “*Piis Manibus Martini Lutheri; . . . . qui . . . . Rationi humanæ suum jus vindicavit, quamque viam, in sacris ad Christi præceptas instaurandis, ipse præiverat, ea ut pergerent posteros admonuit.*”







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